A DYNAMITE THRILLER

Ian Fleming's

JAMES BOND™

Agent 007

CASINO ROYALE

adapted by Van Jensen and Dennis Calero

DYNAMITE®

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Agent 007

in:

CASINO ROYALE

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IN JANUARY 1952, Ian Fleming swapped the bitter British winter for some Caribbean sunshine and contemplated his future. At the end of World War Two he had told his friend Robert Harling that he intended to write 'the spy story to end all spy stories'. Now, aged 43, he sat at his desk in Goldeneye, his home on the north shore of Jamaica and prepared to do just that. He later claimed he was forced to write a novel by finding himself on the brink of marriage to his long-term lover Ann Rothermere. Whatever the case, he wound a sheet of foolscap into his typewriter and went to work. Within ten weeks his first book and the world's introduction to British secret agent James Bond - *Casino Royale* - was complete.

As a journalist for Reuters in the 1930s and then as Foreign Manager for the *Sunday Times* after the Second World War, Fleming was already a master of short, sharp, engaging prose. But the inspiration for recreating a world of spies and global deadly dealings came from an altogether different line of work.

During the War, Fleming had been the Assistant to the Director of British Naval Intelligence. He was a man on the inside, privy to official secrets and a central figure in devising ways to outwit the enemy. His imagination spawned countless ingenious missions – such as Operation Mincemeat, a ploy which tricked German agents to trust false information planted on a body washed up on the Spanish shore. His influence was international: Six months before Pearl Harbor in 1941, he advised U.S. Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan on how to set up the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner to the CIA. With his real-life experience of espionage and his talent for writing, Fleming was perfectly poised to create a best-selling thriller. But nobody could have predicted the impact and longevity his creation would enjoy.

The first time we meet James Bond, he is not what one might expect. We join him in a French casino at 3am where the air is stale and the mood is sombre. Far from being the slick superhero familiar to film audiences, he is a dark and brooding character on the edge of his nerves. The faded glamour of the casino at Royale-les-Eaux perfectly enhances the 'dirty business' of spying and creates a low-lit and moody setting for the tense power play that unfolds across the baccarat table. Bond's mission is to attack the Soviet machine, SMERSH, by bankrupting one of their agents, the avaricious and ruthless man known as Le Chiffre. The two men go head-to-head in a battle of wits but little does Bond know that his enemy holds the trump card all along. The calm elegance of the casino contrasts perfectly with the violent battle between the two men, and the unpredictable charm of luck runs through the heart of both the cards and the game of espionage.

Adapting *Casino Royale* into a graphic novel is no mean feat. Readers of the original will attest that the thrill of the experience comes as much from the pace of the plot as Fleming's lively style. The graphic novel as a medium demands that images conjure the atmosphere and that the nuances of character must be shown in expression and language rather than relying solely on description. So, the first challenge of this project was to create a script that would encapsulate the essence of Fleming's novel without overloading the artwork with too much text.

With this in mind, writer Van Jensen began by selecting *Casino Royale's* most crucial scenes and dialogue to construct a comprehensive and accurate script. Alongside this, there would be two further elements to make the project as faithful to the original as possible. The first of these comes directly from Fleming, whose narrative voice presides and his unique turn of phrase is preserved in order to accentuate the actions and atmosphere. For example: 'Like an octopus under a rock, Le Chiffre watched him from the other side of the table', or the novel's famous first line - 'The scent and smoke and sweat of a casino are nauseating at three in the morning'. Fleming's gift for sensual description and characterful attributions to inanimate objects, such as describing playing cards as, 'inert like two watchful pink crabs' are key to successfully evoking the spirit of the original.

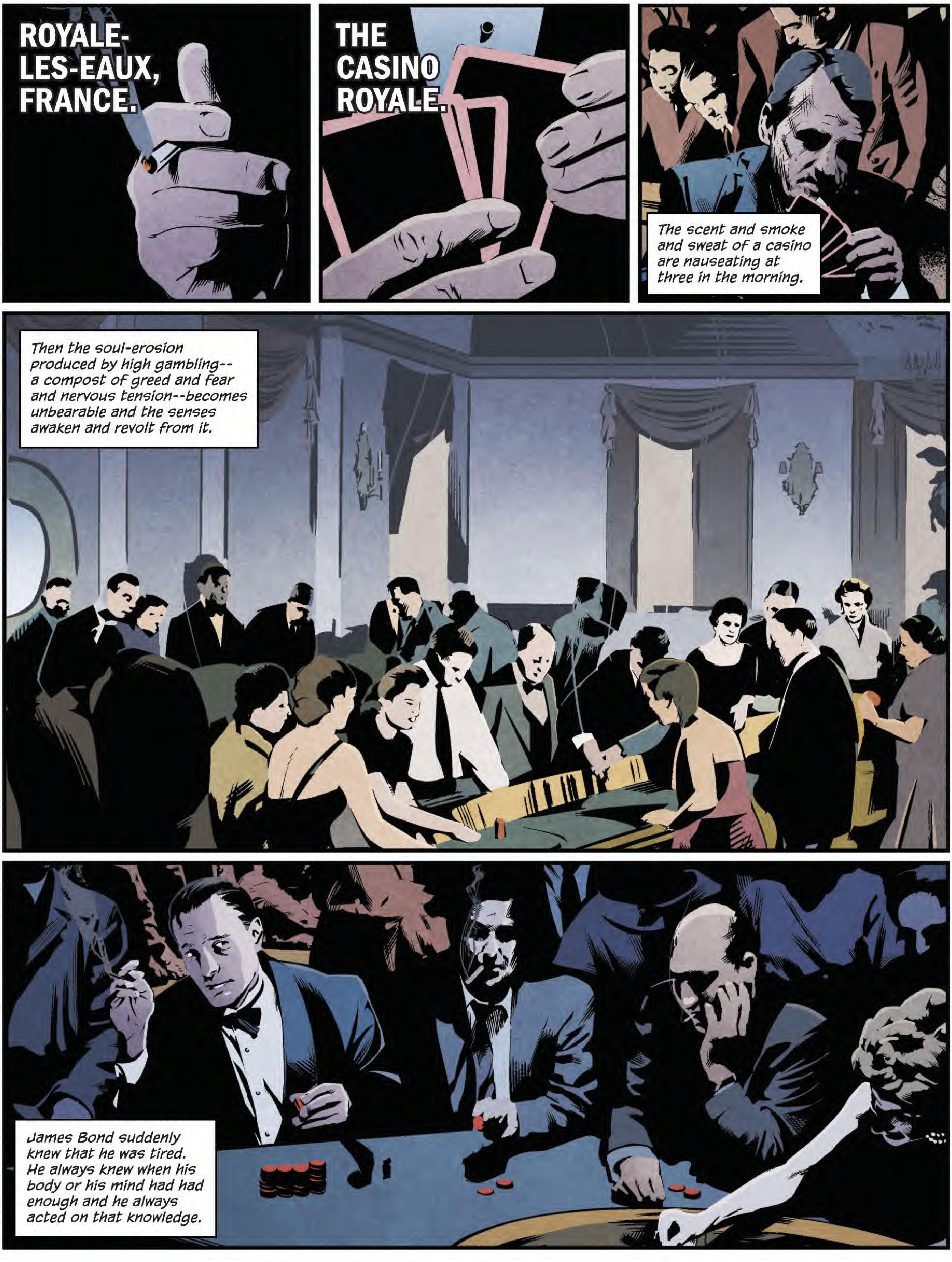
The second element is what Jensen has coined 'Bond View', in which, during the course of a scene, the reader will see Bond's analytical mind highlighting dangers and commenting on the people, objects and setting around him. These additional captions appear in white text outside of the word balloons, arranged close to their subject in the panel. Again, they take their cues from Fleming, translating Bond's worldview into a visual form. This includes the quick calculation of risks, the habits and observations of a trained secret agent, and the preferences and opinions of Bond the man.

Of course, all of this rests on top of new original art by Dennis Calero. A master of shadows and dramatic lighting, his style sings to the tense, atmosphere of the novel, and the paranoid and careful life of a spy at work. The moment Bond sets foot in Royale-les-Eaux, he is under scrutiny and in danger, and the visual tone is a constant reminder of this. When combined with colouring by Chris O'Halloran, the book achieves a visceral quality that fits perfectly with Fleming's Bond. Violence is felt as well as seen, the sensory overload of the casino is palpable, and the narrative crescendos explode into mesmerising spectacle.

When *Casino Royale* was first published in 1953, it struck a chord with its readers. Britain was reeling from World War Two, rationing was still in force and the nation's global importance was on the wane. Audiences reached for *Casino Royale* to indulge in escapism and to believe in the vision that, behind the scenes, Britain was still a major player. The fanciful yet brutally real world Fleming created was entertainment in its purest form. The graphic novel of *Casino Royale* is a faithful adaptation, with a new dimension and fresh energy. Although the original story was conceived in a very different time for a very different audience, this version aims to transcend the years and deliver the same tension and power that enraptured readers all that time ago.

– Ian Fleming Publications Ltd.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE SECRET AGENT


ROYALE-LES-EAUX, FRANCE.
THE CASINO ROYALE.
The scent and smoke and sweat of a casino are nauseating at three in the morning.
Then the soul-erosion produced by high gambling--a compost of greed and fear and nervous tension--becomes unbearable and the senses awaken and revolt from it.
James Bond suddenly knew that he was tired. He always knew when his body or his mind had had enough and he always acted on that knowledge.

This helped him to avoid staleness and the sensual bluntness that breeds mistakes.
With another part of his mind, he had a vision of tomorrow's regular morning meeting of the casino committee...
"Le Chiffre. He's up two million today, playing his usual game--BACCARAT CHEMIN DE FER."
HUNDRED-MILLE PLAQUES.
"Miss Fairchild. Up a million in an hour. She executed three 'bancos' of Monsieur Le Chiffre. Plays with coolness.
"The Englishman. Mister Bond.
"He increased his winnings to three million over two days, playing a progressive system on red at table five.
"He plays in maximums. He has luck.
CAISSE
"His nerves seem good."

Bond was not personally concerned with robbing the casino, but only interested.
CAISSE
Good evening, Monsieur Bond.
SAFELY BEHIND THE COUNTER:
HUNDRED-THOUSAND AND TEN-THOUSAND FRANC NOTES.
PLAQUES.
COLT .45 CALIBER PISTOL.
It would take ten good men to rob the casino, and they would have to kill one or two employees. Anyway, you probably couldn't find ten non-squeal killers in France, or in any other country, for that matter.
Merci.
Any hint of trouble, and the man will activate the foot-switch, which will lock the doors to bar entry or exit.
Bond made up his mind that Le Chiffre would in no circumstance try to rob the casino and he put the contingency out of his mind.
He could feel his eyes filling their sockets. The front of his face, his nose and antrum, were congested. He breathed the sweet night air deeply and focused his senses and wits.
He wanted to know if anyone had searched his room since he had left it before dinner.

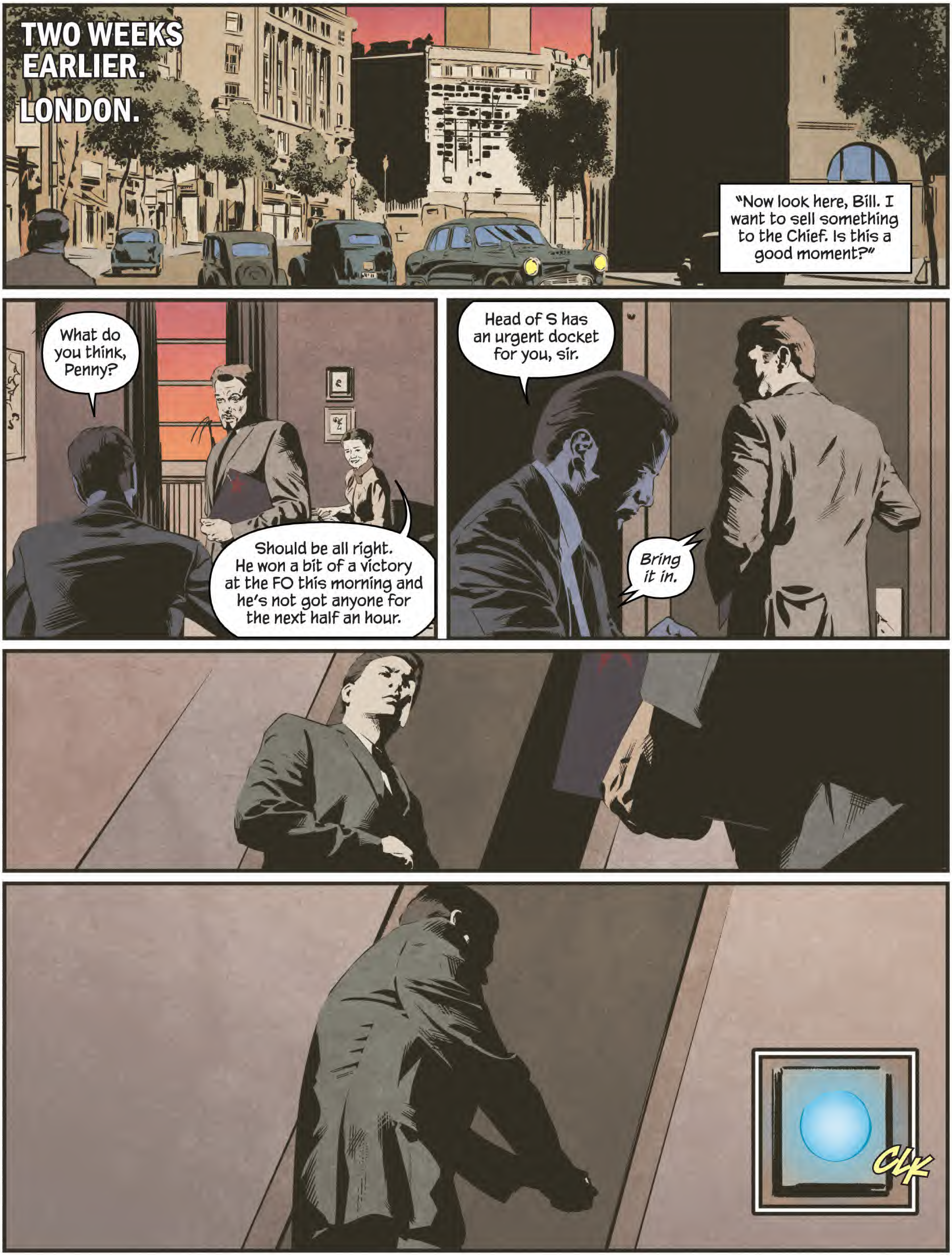
Monsieur Bond--your key. And you have a cable from Jamaica...
This meant that ten million francs was on the way to him. It was the reply to a request Bond had sent that afternoon through Paris to his headquarters in London asking for more funds.
POST OFFICE TELEGRAM
Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.
KINGSTONJA XXXX XXXXXX XXXX XXX BOND SPLENDIDE ROYALE-LES-EAUX SEINE INFERIEURE HAVANA CIGAR PRODUCTION ALL CUBAN FACTORIES 1915 TEN MILLION REPEAT. TEN MILLION STOP HOPE THIS FIGURE YOU REQUIRE REGARDS. DASILVA
Paris had spoken to London where Clements, the head of Bond's department, had spoken to M, who had smiled wryly and told 'The Broker' to fix it with the Treasury.
BRITISH SECRET SERVICE HQ
Bond was used to oblique control and rather liked it. He felt it feather-bedded him a little, allowed him to give or take an hour or two in his communications with M.
M. HEAD OF THE SECRET SERVICE IN THE BRITISH DEFENCE MINISTRIES. APPROVED THE OPERATION--RELUCTANTLY.
S. HEAD OF THE SOVIET SECTION. CONCEIVED OF THE OPERATION.
CLEMENTS. HEAD OF 00 SECTION
FAWCETT. RELAYING MESSAGES FROM LONDON TO BOND VIA JAMAICA.
COVER: HEAD OF THE PICTURE DESK OF THE GLEANER NEWSPAPER IN KINGSTON.
JAMES BOND. THE BLUNT INSTRUMENT.
COVER: RICH CLIENT OF MESSRS CAFFERY, THE PRINCIPAL IMPORT AND EXPORT FIRM OF JAMAICA.
He knew that this was probably a fallacy, that probably there was another member of the Service at Royale-les-Eaux who was reporting independently.
But it did give the illusion that he wasn't only 150 miles across the Channel from that deadly office building near Regent's Park, being watched and judged by those few cold brains that made the whole show work.

TEAR OFF TELEGRAM BEFORE COMPOSING RESPONSE. LEAVE NO CARBON COPY.
hanks, Information should suffice – Bond
He regretted the hubris of his reply to M. As a gambler, he knew it was a mistake to rely on too small a capital.
CONCIERGE. COULD BRIBE COPY OF CABLE FROM POST OFFICE, IF HE ISN'T ALREADY STEAMING OPEN THE ENVELOPES. THREAT? NOT IMMEDIATE.
THE LIFT. TOO CONFINED. TOO DANGEROUS.
STAIRS. SAFER.
Anyway, M probably wouldn't let him have any more.
WALKING ON THE BALLS OF HIS FEET. QUIET.
Bond knew exactly where the light switch was...

HIS OWN HAIR, WEDGED INTO THE DESK DRAWER. UNDISTURBED.
These minute burglar alarms did not make him feel foolish.
TALCUM POWDER SMEARED ON PORCELAIN WARDROBE HANDLE. IMMACULATE.
He was a secret agent, and still alive thanks to his exact attention to the detail of his profession.
Routine precautions were to him no more unreasonable than they would be to a deep-sea diver or a test pilot, or to any man earning danger-money.
ONE COLD SHOWER LATER. REFRESHED.
Satisfied that his room had not been searched while he was at the casino, Bond sat down and entered some figures. Then he sat motionless, gazing out of the window across the dark sea.
CIGARETTE NO. 70 TODAY.
THREE MILLION FRANCS IN WINNINGS OVER TWO DAYS. PLUS LONDON'S TEN MILLION STAKE, PLUS THE FURTHER TEN. TOTAL WORKING CAPITAL--TWENTY-THREE MILLION FRANCS.

.38 POLICE POSITIVE.
SIX ROUNDS.
SAWN BARREL.

CHAPTER TWO:
DOSSIER FOR M


TWO WEEKS EARLIER.
LONDON.
"Now look here, Bill. I want to sell something to the Chief. Is this a good moment?"
What do you think, Penny?
Should be all right. He won a bit of a victory at the FO this morning and he's not got anyone for the next half an hour.
Head of S has an urgent docket for you, sir.
Bring it in.
CLK

What's this about then, S?
The destruction of MONSIEUR LE CHIFFRE, one of the Opposition's chief agents in France and undercover Paymaster of the Communist-controlled trade union in the heavy and transport industries of Alsace--
--which, as we know, is an important fifth column in the event of war with Redland.

NAME: LE CHIFFRE.
ORIGIN: UNKNOWN.

FIRST ENCOUNTERED AS A DISPLACED PERSON, INMATE OF DACHAU DP CAMP IN THE US ZONE OF GERMANY, JUNE 1945.

APPARENTLY SUFFERING FROM AMNESIA AND PARALYSIS OF VOCAL CHORDS (? BOTH FEIGNED).

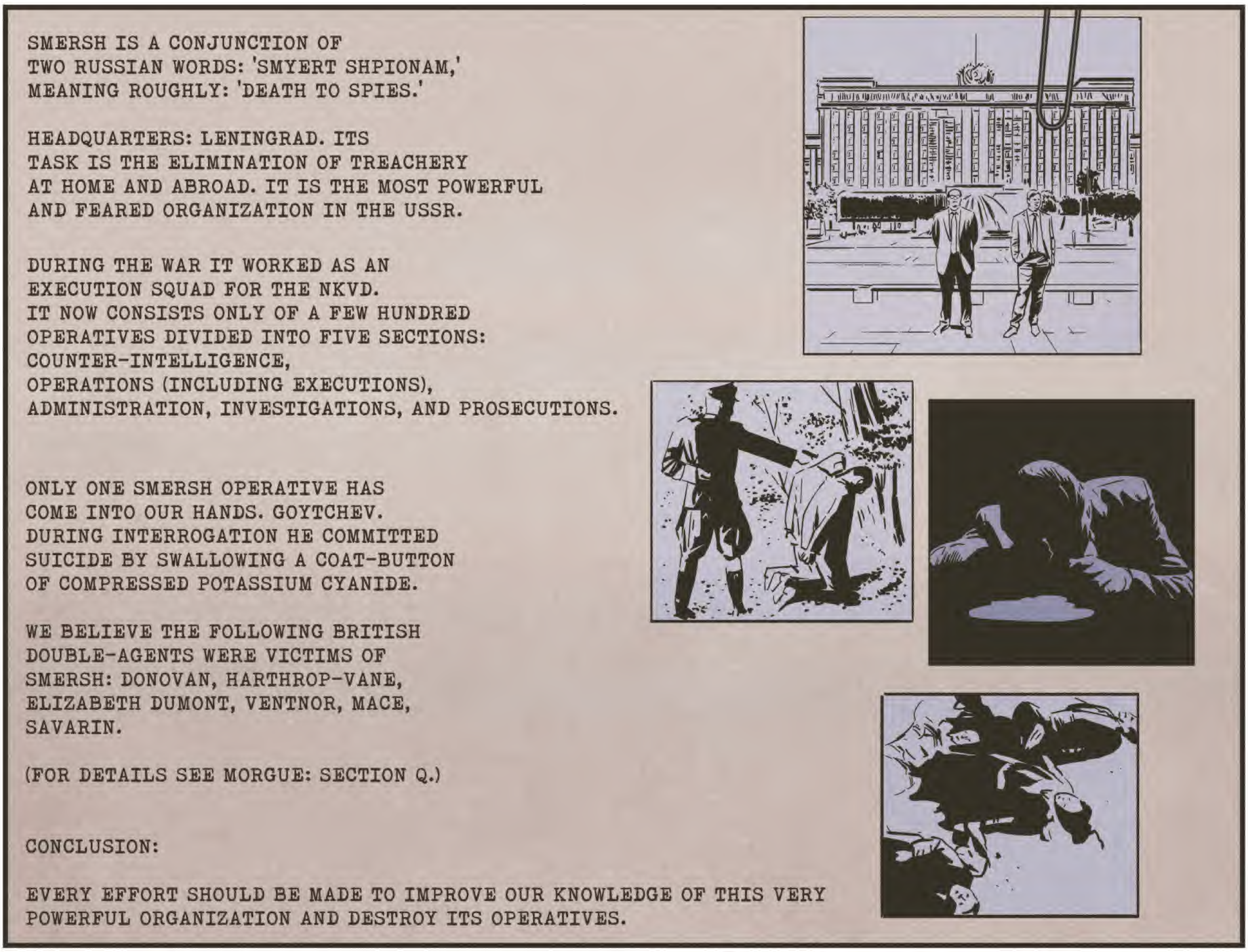
AGE: ABOUT 45.

DRESSES WELL. SMOKES INCESSANTLY CAPORALS. AT FREQUENT INTERVALS INHALES FROM A BENZEDRINE INHALER. SMILES INFREQUENTLY.
HABITS: MOSTLY EXPENSIVE, BUT DISCREET. LARGE SEXUAL APPETITES. FLAGELLANT. EXPERT DRIVER OF FAST CARS. CARRIES THREE EVERSHARP RAZOR BLADES, IN HAT-BAND, HEEL OF LEFT SHOE AND CIGARETTE-CASE.

COMMENT: A FORMIDABLE AND
EROUS AGENT OF THE USSR

Le Chiffre is an admirable agent of the USSR, but his predilections are an Achilles heel. One of his mistresses is controlled by Station F, who has been able to obtain insight into his private affairs.
It seems he's on the brink of a financial crisis.
"In January 1946, Le Chiffre bought control of a chain of brothels in Normandy and Brittany with some fifty million francs entrusted to him by Leningrad Section III for financing the trade union.
"He could have found many investments more savoury...had he not been tempted by the by-product of unlimited women for his personal use.
"Fate rebuked him with terrifying swiftness."

Three months later, a law passed entitled *Loi Tendant à la Fermeture des Maisons de Tolérance et au Renforcement de la Lutte contre le Proxénitisme--*
What the hell does this word mean?
PIMPING, sir.
This is not the BERLITZ SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, Head of S. If you want to show off your knowledge of foreign jaw-breakers, be good enough to provide a crib. Better still, use English.
Sorry, sir.
Go on.
"The law closed all houses of ill-fame. The Police des Moeurs were on his trail, and in a short while twenty or more of his establishments were closed down.
"In the past few months, a veritable rat-hunt has been operated, with the result that nothing remains of Le Chiffre's original investment."
It does not seem Leningrad is suspicious yet, but it is possible that SMERSH is on the scent. Last week, a high-grade source of Station P reported that a senior official of that efficient organ of Soviet vengeance left Warsaw for Strasbourg.
SMERSH...



SMERSH IS A CONJUNCTION OF
TWO RUSSIAN WORDS: 'SMYERT SHPIONAM,'
MEANING ROUGHLY: 'DEATH TO SPIES.'

HEADQUARTERS: LENINGRAD. ITS
TASK IS THE ELIMINATION OF TREACHERY
AT HOME AND ABROAD. IT IS THE MOST POWERFUL
AND FEARED ORGANIZATION IN THE USSR.

DURING THE WAR IT WORKED AS AN
EXECUTION SQUAD FOR THE NKVD.
IT NOW CONSISTS ONLY OF A FEW HUNDRED
OPERATIVES DIVIDED INTO FIVE SECTIONS:
COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE,
OPERATIONS (INCLUDING EXECUTIONS),
ADMINISTRATION, INVESTIGATIONS, AND PROSECUTIONS.

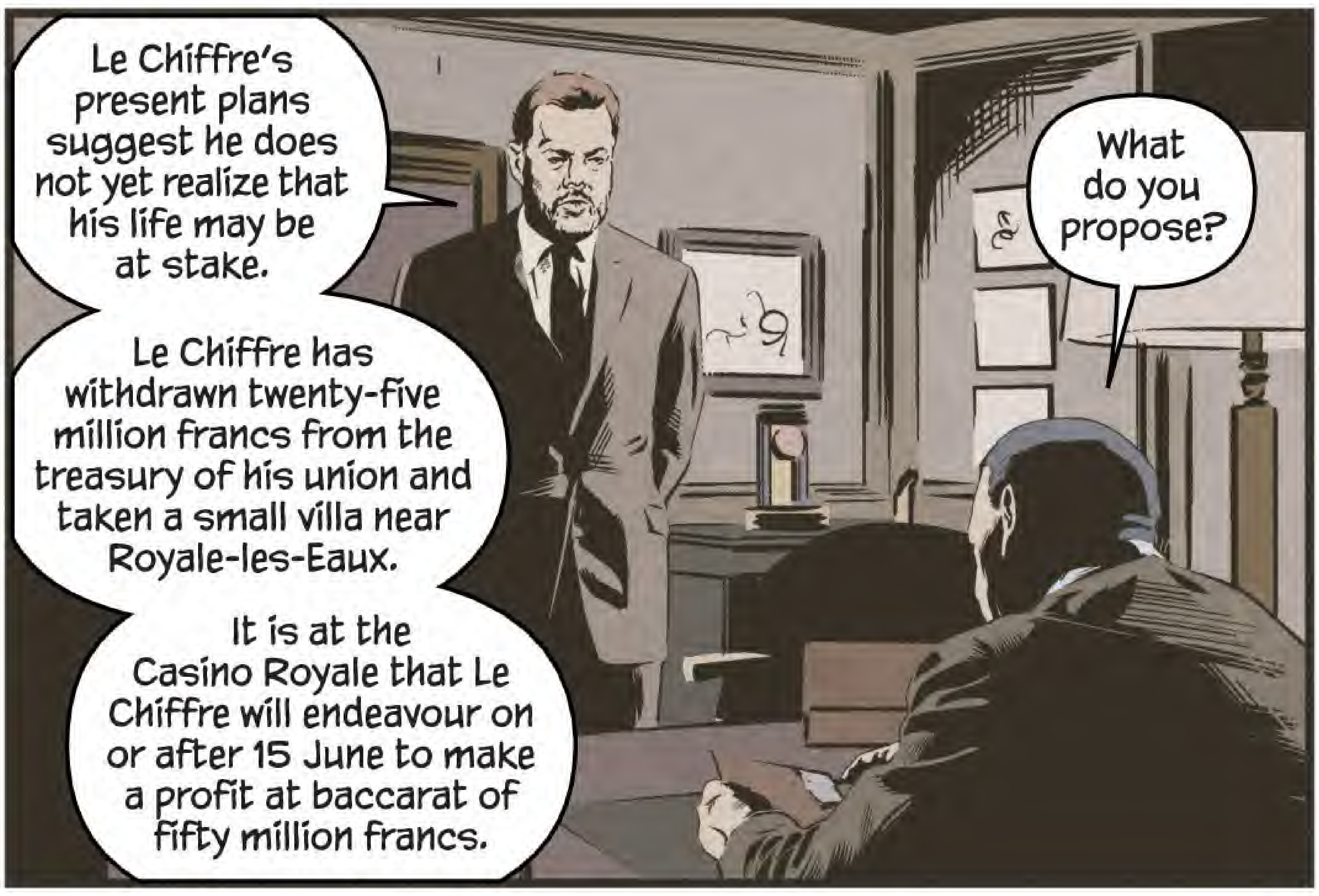
ONLY ONE SMERSH OPERATIVE HAS
COME INTO OUR HANDS. GOYTCHEV.
DURING INTERROGATION HE COMMITTED
SUICIDE BY SWALLOWING A COAT-BUTTON
OF COMPRESSED POTASSIUM CYANIDE.

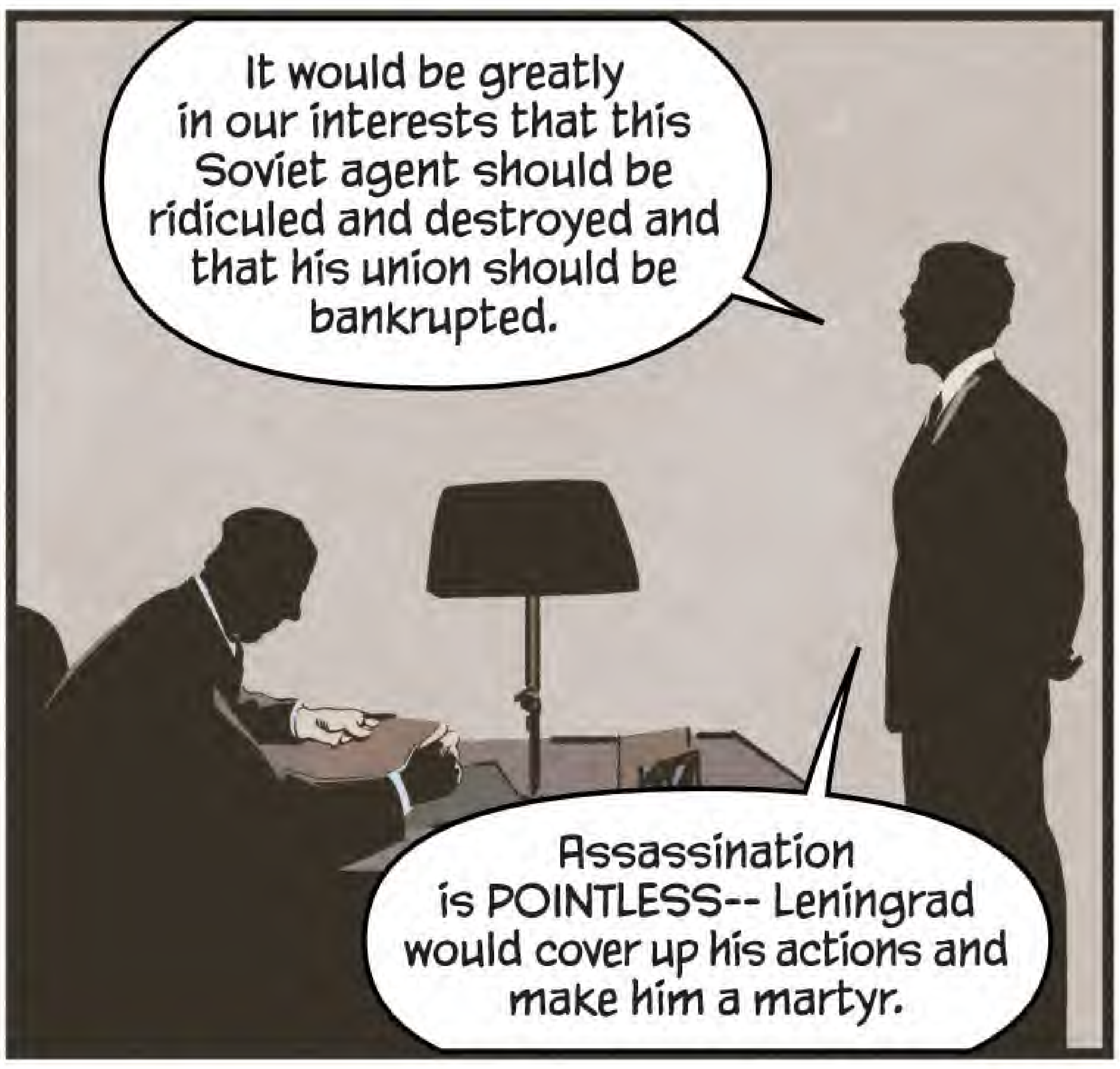
WE BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING BRITISH
DOUBLE-AGENTS WERE VICTIMS OF
SMERSH: DONOVAN, HARTHROP-VANE,
ELIZABETH DUMONT, VENTNOR, MACE,
SAVARIN.

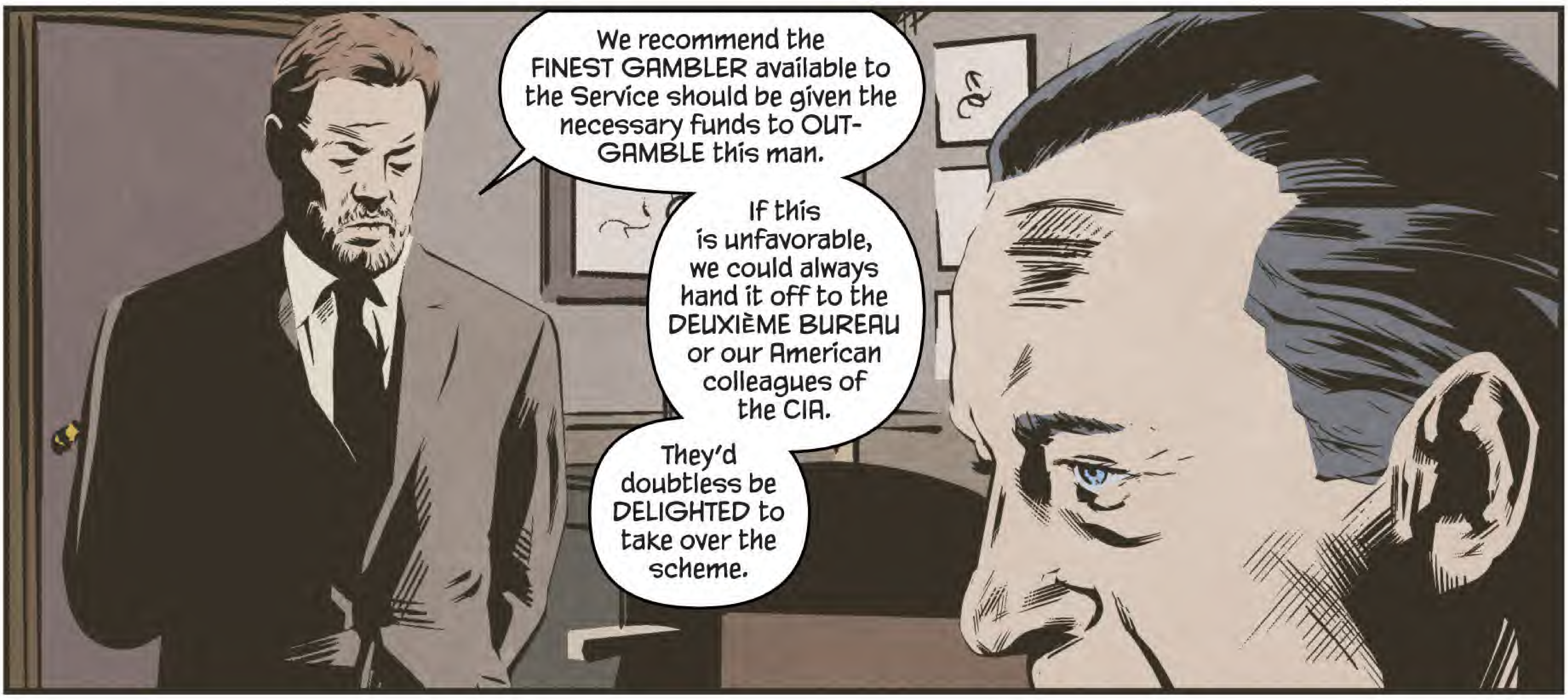
(FOR DETAILS SEE MORGUE: SECTION Q.)

CONCLUSION:

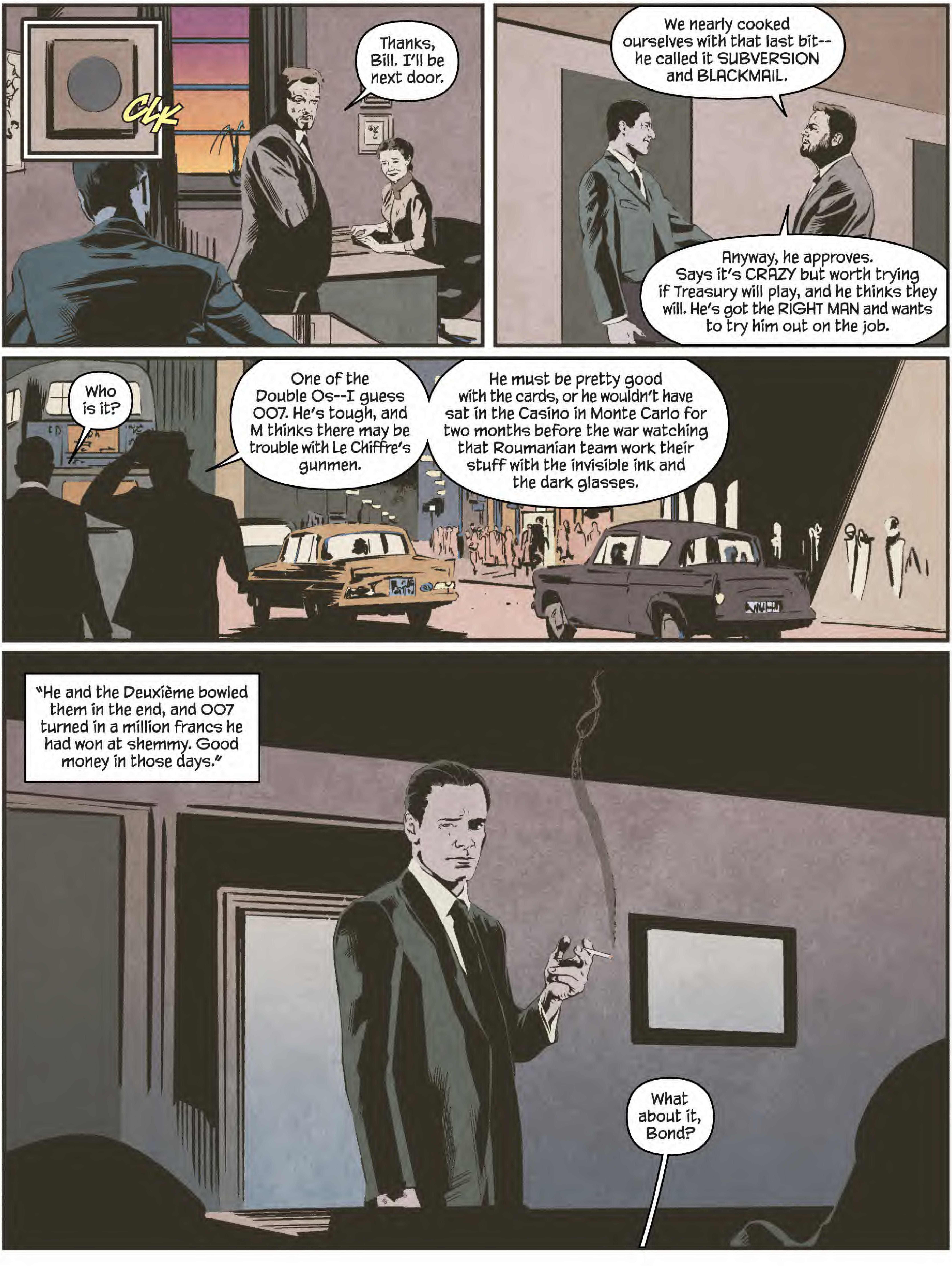
EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS VERY
POWERFUL ORGANIZATION AND DESTROY ITS OPERATIVES.


Le Chiffre's present plans suggest he does not yet realize that his life may be at stake.
Le Chiffre has withdrawn twenty-five million francs from the treasury of his union and taken a small villa near Royale-les-Eaux.
It is at the Casino Royale that Le Chiffre will endeavour on or after 15 June to make a profit at baccarat of fifty million francs.
What do you propose?


It would be greatly in our interests that this Soviet agent should be ridiculed and destroyed and that his union should be bankrupted.
Assassination is POINTLESS-- Leningrad would cover up his actions and make him a martyr.


We recommend the FINEST GAMBLER available to the Service should be given the necessary funds to OUT-GAMBLE this man.
If this is unfavorable, we could always hand it off to the DEUXIÈME BUREAU or our American colleagues of the CIA.
They'd doubtless be DELIGHTED to take over the scheme.

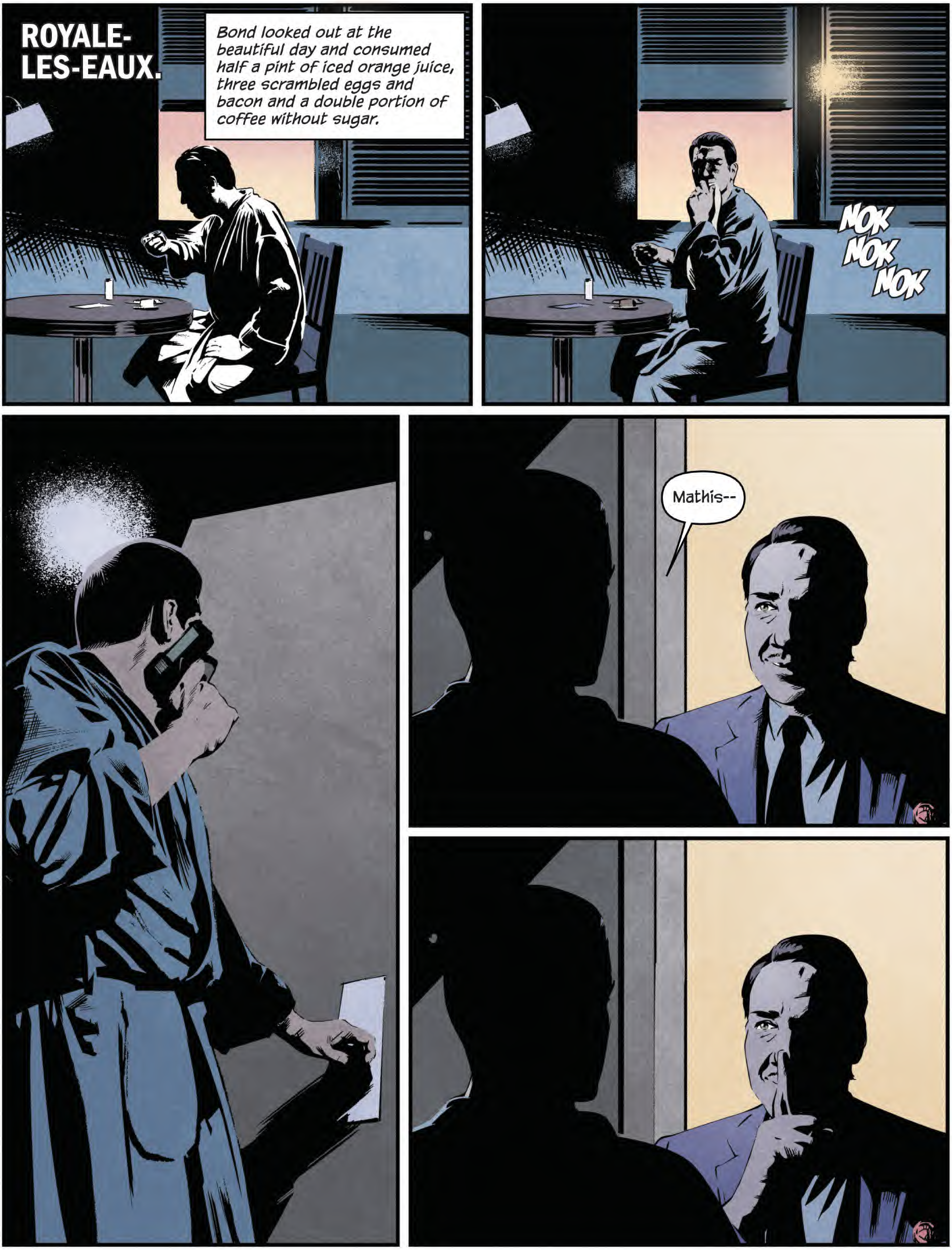
CHAPTER THREE:
NUMBER
007


CLK
Thanks, Bill. I'll be next door.
We nearly cooked ourselves with that last bit--he called it SUBVERSION and BLACKMAIL.
Anyway, he approves. Says it's CRAZY but worth trying if Treasury will play, and he thinks they will. He's got the RIGHT MAN and wants to try him out on the job.
Who is it?
One of the Double Os--I guess 007. He's tough, and M thinks there may be trouble with Le Chiffre's gunmen.
He must be pretty good with the cards, or he wouldn't have sat in the Casino in Monte Carlo for two months before the war watching that Roumanian team work their stuff with the invisible ink and the dark glasses.
"He and the Deuxième bowled them in the end, and 007 turned in a million francs he had won at shemmy. Good money in those days."
What about it, Bond?

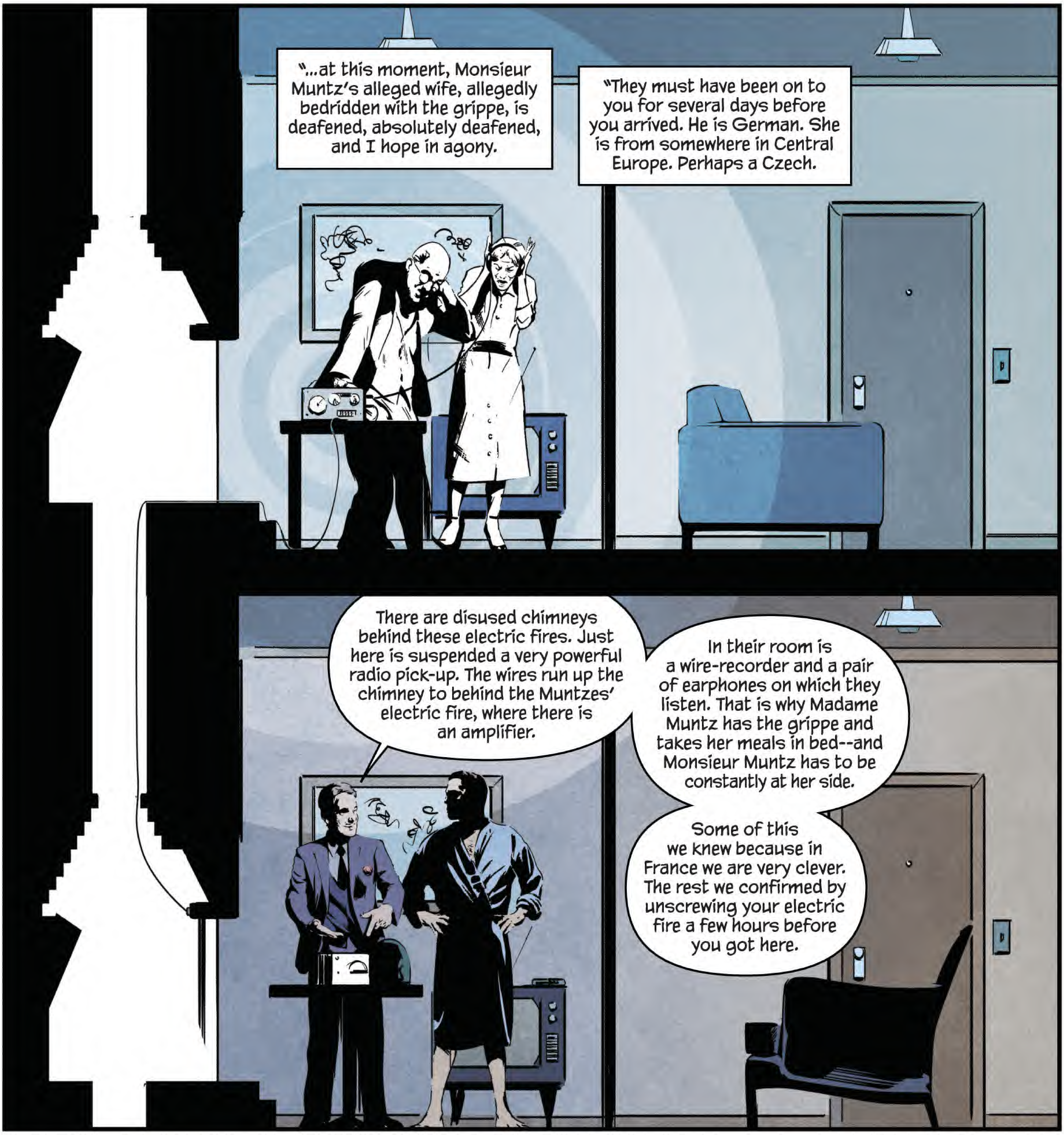
It's very kind of you, sir. I'd like to do it. But I can't promise to win.
I might get a bad run against me and get cleaned out. Play's going to be pretty high--opening'll go up to half a million, I should think--
HE can have a bad run, too. You'll have plenty of capital.
Go over a few days before the big game starts and get your hand in. Have a talk with Q about rooms and trains, and any equipment. I'll try to persuade the Deuxième to send Mathis.
Anything else?
I'd certainly like to have Mathis, sir.
TRY and pull it off. We're going to look pretty FOOLISH if you don't. And watch out. This sounds like an amusing job, but I don't think it's going to be. Le Chiffre is a good man.
Well, best of luck.
Thank you, sir.
Just a minute.
I think I'll keep you COVERED, Bond. TWO heads are better than one.
They'll get in touch with you at Royale. You needn't worry. It'll be someone GOOD.

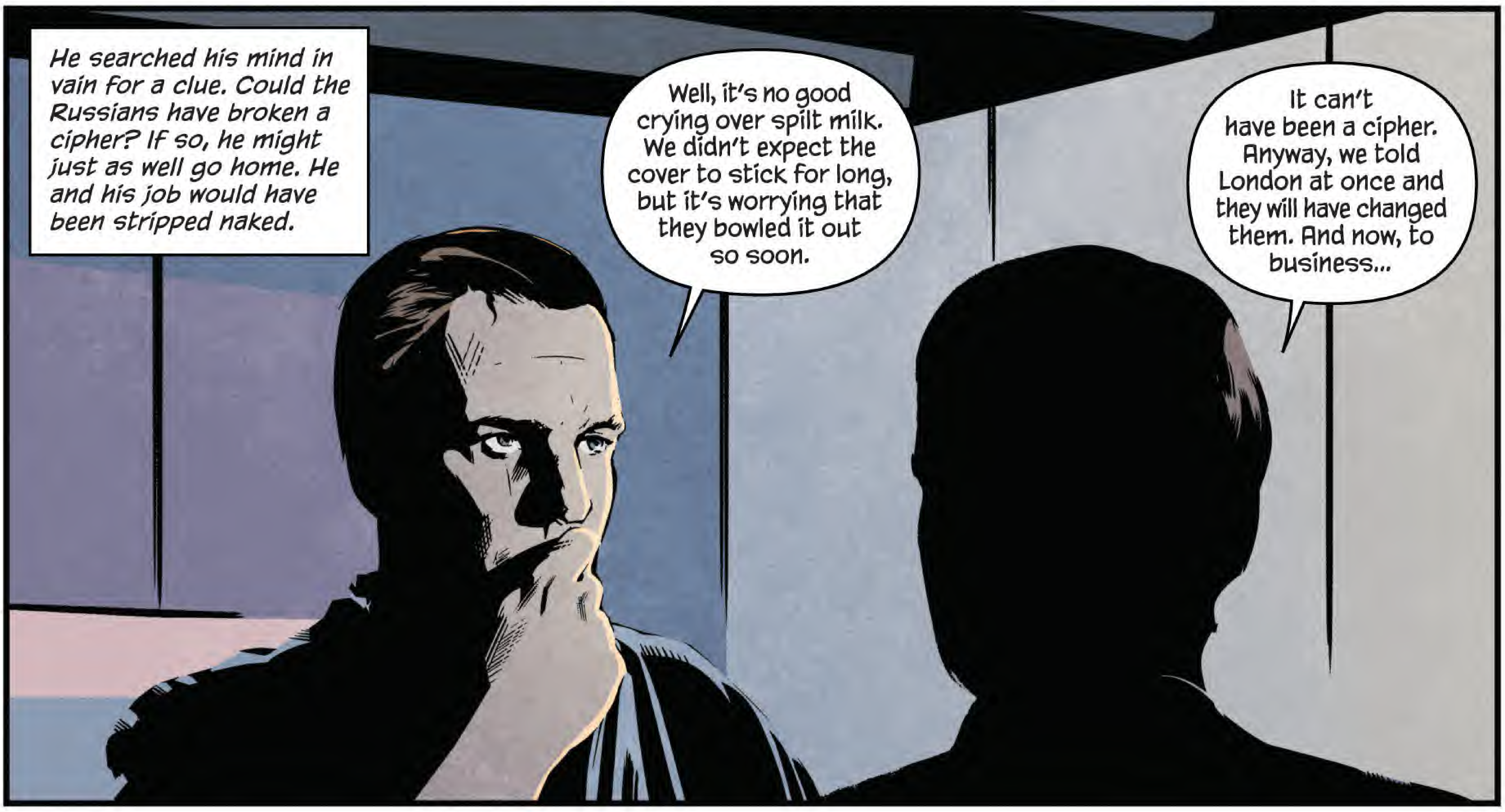
CHAPTER FOUR:

L'ENNEMI ÉCOUTE


ROYALE-LES-EAUX.
Bond looked out at the beautiful day and consumed half a pint of iced orange juice, three scrambled eggs and bacon and a double portion of coffee without sugar.
NOK NOK NOK
Mathis--

I have just arrived from Paris, monsieur, and here is the RADIO SET you asked to have--five valves, superhet--you should be able to get most of the capitals of Europe from Royale.
It sounds all right.
The Compagnons de la Chanson should now be on the medium wave from Rome. They are touring Europe.
Let us see what the reception is like. It should be a fair test.
VOLUME ON TO FULL. RED LIGHT INDICATES THE LONG WAVEBAND IS POWERED-ON.
SSSKKSSSSSS
My dear monsieur--forgive me please--badly tuned.
Now what the hell?
My dear friend, you are blown, blown, BLOWN. Up there...

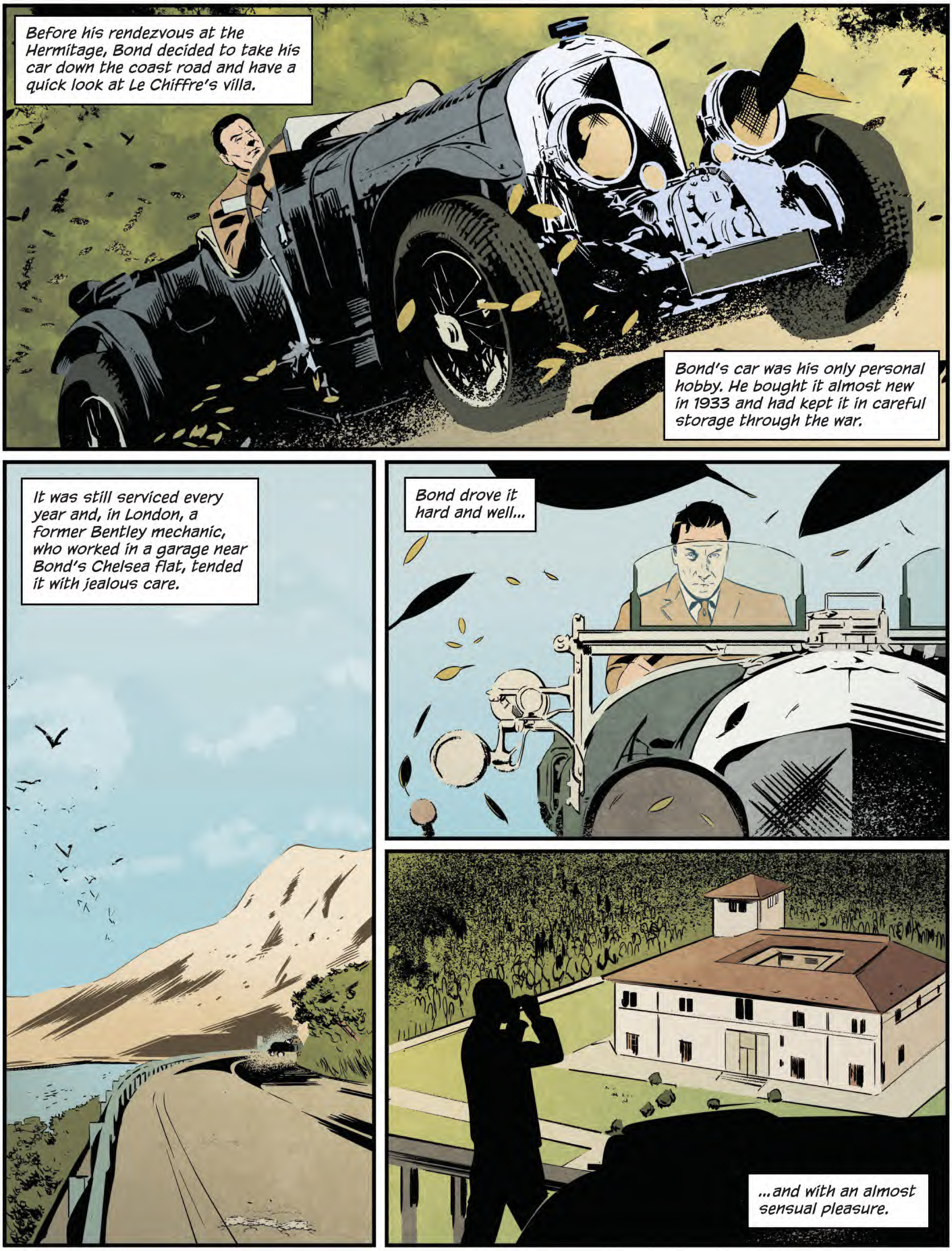

"...at this moment, Monsieur Muntz's alleged wife, allegedly bedridden with the grippe, is deafened, absolutely deafened, and I hope in agony.
"They must have been on to you for several days before you arrived. He is German. She is from somewhere in Central Europe. Perhaps a Czech.
There are disused chimneys behind these electric fires. Just here is suspended a very powerful radio pick-up. The wires run up the chimney to behind the Muntzes' electric fire, where there is an amplifier.
In their room is a wire-recorder and a pair of earphones on which they listen. That is why Madame Muntz has the grippe and takes her meals in bed--and Monsieur Muntz has to be constantly at her side.
Some of this we knew because in France we are very clever. The rest we confirmed by unscrewing your electric fire a few hours before you got here.


He searched his mind in vain for a clue. Could the Russians have broken a cipher? If so, he might just as well go home. He and his job would have been stripped naked.
Well, it's no good crying over spilt milk. We didn't expect the cover to stick for long, but it's worrying that they bowled it out so soon.
It can't have been a cipher. Anyway, we told London at once and they will have changed them. And now, to business...

You will be pleased with your Number Two. SHE is very beautiful. Black hair, blue eyes and splendid...er... PROTUBERANCES. Back and front.
And she is a wireless expert which, though sexually less interesting, makes her a perfect employee of Radio Stentor and assistant to myself.
She will be on hand in case your new radio breaks down. All new machines have troubles in the first day or two--
--and occasionally at NIGHT.
What the hell do they want to send a woman for? Do they think this is a bloody PICNIC?
Calm yourself, my dear James. She is as serious as you could wish and cold as an icicle. What is more natural than that you should pick up a pretty girl here?
As a Jamaican millionaire, you would look naked without one.
Any other surprises?
Le Chiffre has TWO GUARDS with him. They look like pretty capable fellows. One has been seen visiting a little pension where three rather SUBHUMAN characters checked in two days ago. They may be part of the team.
They speak Bulgarian. They're stupid, but obedient. The Russians use them for SIMPLE killings... or as fall-guys for COMPLICATED ones.
Thanks very much. Which is MINE to be?

Come to the bar of the Hermitage before lunch. I'll fix the introduction. Ask her to dinner this evening. Then it will be natural for her to come into the Casino with you. I'll be there, too, but in the background.
Oh, and there's an American called Leiter here. Felix Leiter. He's the CIA chap from Fontainebleau. He looks okay. May come in useful.
Mathis switched off the set and they exchanged some phrases about how Bond should pay for it. Then with effusive farewells and a final wink Mathis bowed himself out.
Nothing Mathis had told him was reassuring. He was completely blown and under surveillance. An attempt might be made to put him away. The Russians had no stupid prejudices about murder.
And then there was this pest of a girl. Women were for recreation.
On a job, they got in the way and fogged things up with sex and hurt feelings and all the emotional baggage they carried around. One had to look out for them and take care of them.
Bitch.
Bond remembered the Muntzes...
BITCH.

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE GIRL FROM HEADQUARTERS


Before his rendezvous at the Hermitage, Bond decided to take his car down the coast road and have a quick look at Le Chiffre's villa.
Bond's car was his only personal hobby. He bought it almost new in 1933 and had kept it in careful storage through the war.
It was still serviced every year and, in London, a former Bentley mechanic, who worked in a garage near Bond's Chelsea flat, tended it with jealous care.
Bond drove it hard and well...
...and with an almost sensual pleasure.

But SURELY it is Monsieur Bond?
THE HERMITAGE BAR.
Can it be that you are ALONE? May I present my colleague, MADEMOISELLE LYND?
My dear, this is the gentleman from Jamaica with whom I had the pleasure of doing business this morning.
I am alone. Would you both care to join me?
Mathis and Bond exchanged cheerful talk about the weather. The girl sat silent. She accepted one of Bond's cigarettes, exhaling casually.
Her movements were economical and precise with no trace of self-consciousness. Bond felt her presence strongly.
While he and Mathis talked, he turned from time to time towards her, politely including her in the conversation, but adding up the impressions recorded by each glance.

HAIR IS VERY BLACK, CUT SQUARE AND LOW.
JAW HAS A CLEAR AND BEAUTIFUL LINE.
EYES WIDE APART AND DEEP BLUE.
LIGHTLY SUN-TANNED.
FINGERNAILS UNPAINTED, CUT SHORT.
NO TRACE OF MAKEUP...
...EXCEPT ON HER WIDE AND SENSUAL MOUTH.
JEWELRY: A PLAIN GOLD CHAIN...
...AND TOPAZ RING ON FOURTH FINGER OF RIGHT HAND.
WAIST NARROW, BUT NOT THIN. BELT: THREE-INCH, HANDSTITCHED, BLACK.
DRESS: MEDIUM LENGTH, GREY *SOIE SAUVAGE.*
SQUARE-CUT BODICE, TIGHT ACROSS HER FINE BREASTS.
SHOES: SQUARE-TOED, BLACK LEATHER.

Bond was excited by her beauty and intrigued by her composure. The prospect of working with her stimulated him.
At the same time he felt a vague disquiet.
On an impulse he touched wood.
Forgive me while I telephone to the Dubernes. I must arrange my rendezvous for dinner tonight.
Are you sure you won't mind being left to your own devices this evening?
If you are going to be alone tonight, would you care to have dinner with me?
I would like to very much, and then perhaps you would chaperon me to the Casino where Monsieur Mathis tells me you are very much at home.
Perhaps *I* will bring you luck.

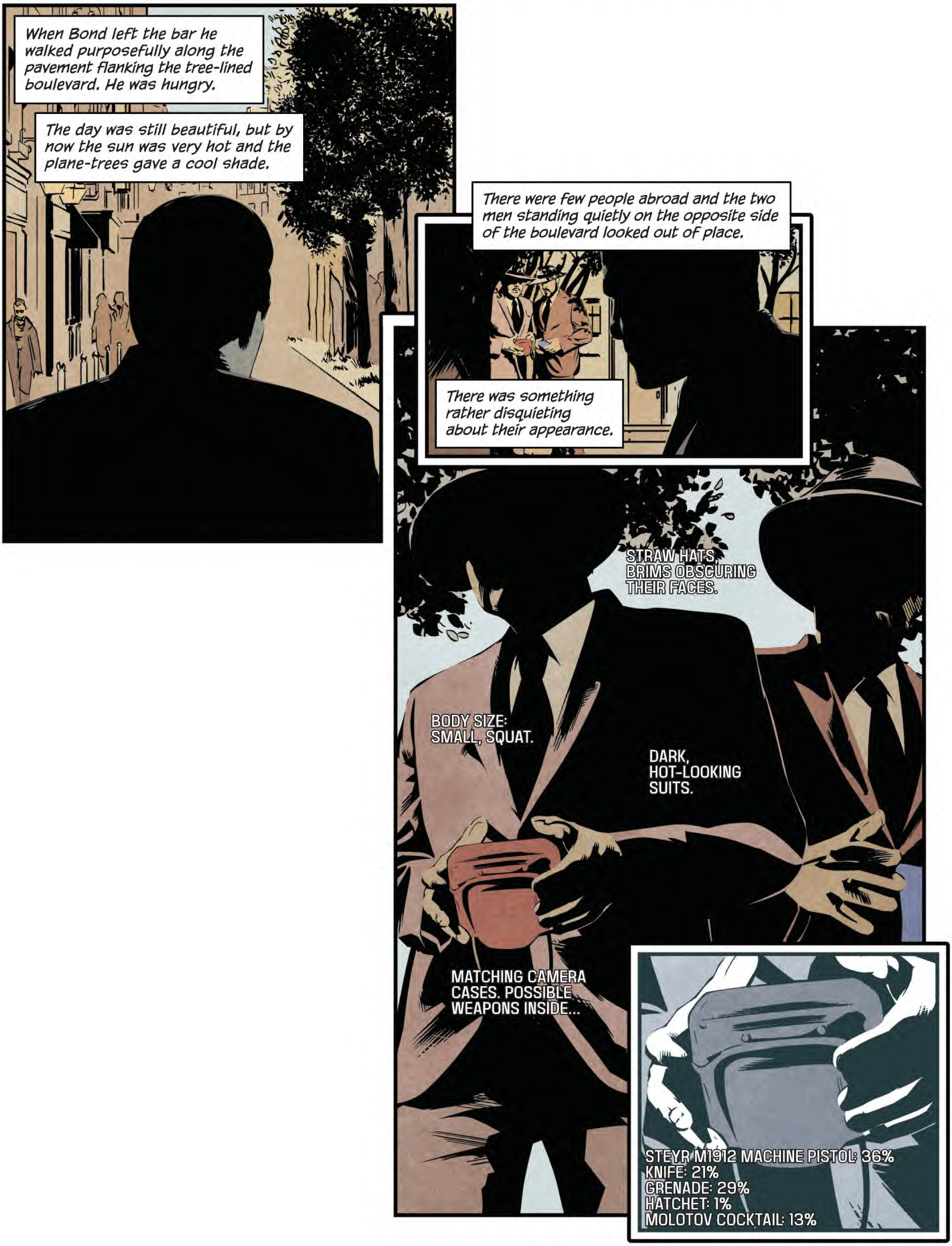
Bond realized it would be quite easy after all to plan the details of his project with her.
He had imagined many hurdles before establishing a rapport, but now he felt he could get straight down to professional details.
He was quite honest to himself about the hypocrisy of his attitude towards her. As a woman, he wanted to sleep with her but only when the job had been done.
Bond explained he was expected back at his hotel to have lunch with friends.
When for a moment he held her hand in his he felt a warmth of affection and understanding pass between them that would have seemed impossible half an hour earlier.
That is a VERY good friend of mine. I am glad you have met each other. I can already feel the ICE-FLOES on the two rivers breaking up.
I don't think Bond has ever been melted. It will be a new experience for him...and for you.
He is very good-looking. He reminds me rather of Hoagy Carmichael, but there is something cold and ruthless in his--

SKRRRAAAGGSH

Stay there.

CHAPTER SIX:

TWO MEN IN STRAW HATS


When Bond left the bar he walked purposefully along the pavement flanking the tree-lined boulevard. He was hungry.
The day was still beautiful, but by now the sun was very hot and the plane-trees gave a cool shade.
There were few people abroad and the two men standing quietly on the opposite side of the boulevard looked out of place.
There was something rather disquieting about their appearance.
STRAW HATS, BRIMS OBSCURING THEIR FACES.
BODY SIZE: SMALL, SQUAT.
DARK, HOT-LOOKING SUITS.
MATCHING CAMERA CASES. POSSIBLE WEAPONS INSIDE...
STEYR M1912 MACHINE PISTOL: 36%
KNIFE: 21%
GRENADE: 29%
HATCHET: 1%
MOLOTOV COCKTAIL: 13%

By the time Bond had taken in these details, he had come to within fifty yards of the two men, when Red-man seemed to give a short nod to Blue-man.
Just then, Blue-man seemed to fiddle with his case. Bond could not see exactly, blocked by the trunk of a plane-tree. Then...
KRAAK
KRAACK

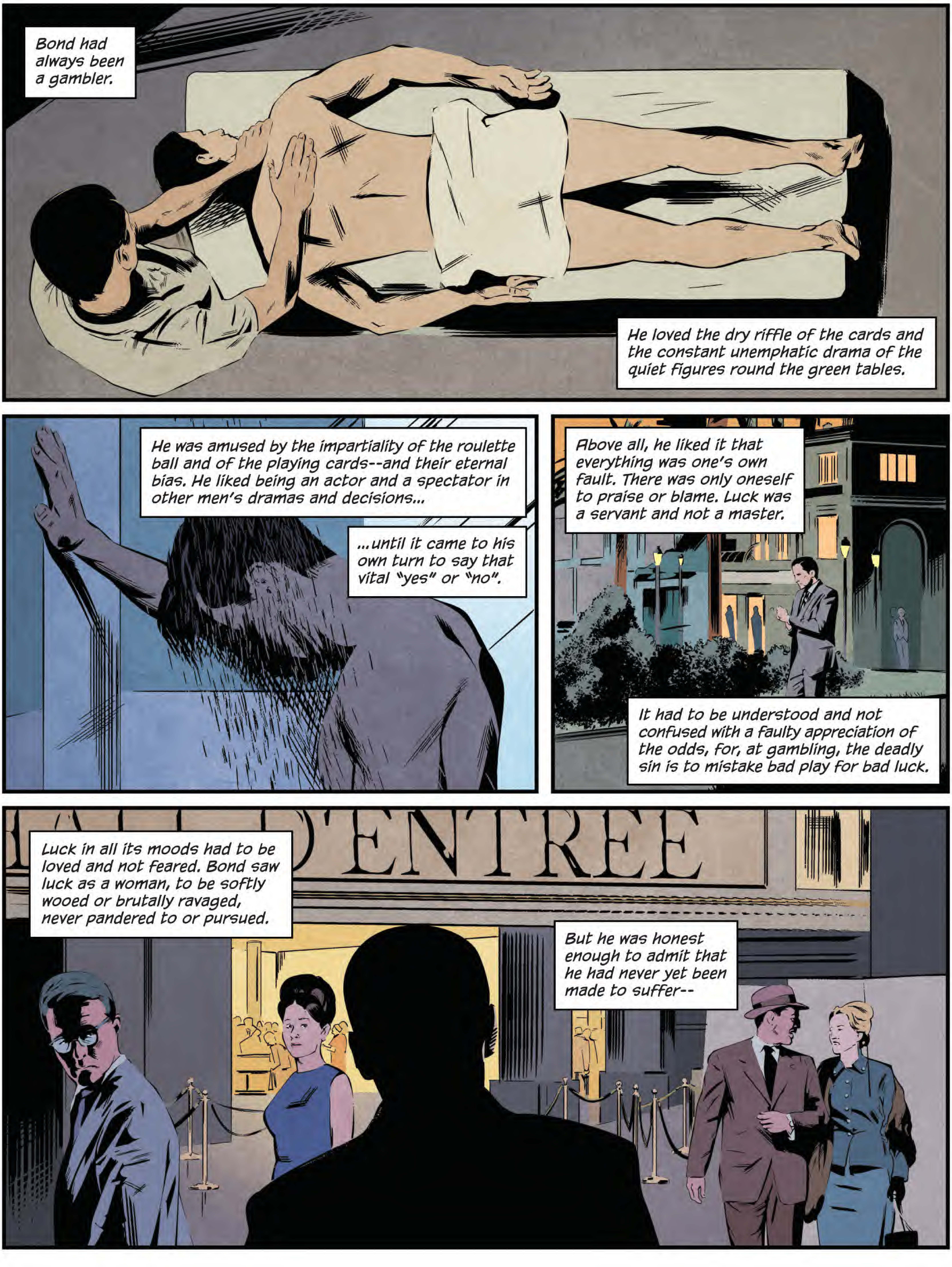
Despite the protection of the tree-trunk, Bond was slammed down to the pavement by a bolt of hot air which dented his cheeks and stomach as if they had been made of paper.
He lay, gazing at the sun, while the air went on twanging with the explosion as if someone had hit the bass register of a piano with a sledgehammer.
A ghastly rain fell on and around him--pieces of flesh and shreds of blood-soaked clothing mingled with branches and gravel, twigs and leaves.
There was an obscene smell of high explosive, of burning wood, and, yes--that was it--roast mutton.
Of the two men in straw hats, there remained absolutely nothing but red traces on the road, and on the pavements and against the trunks of the trees, and there were glittering shreds high up in the branches.
=urrhk=

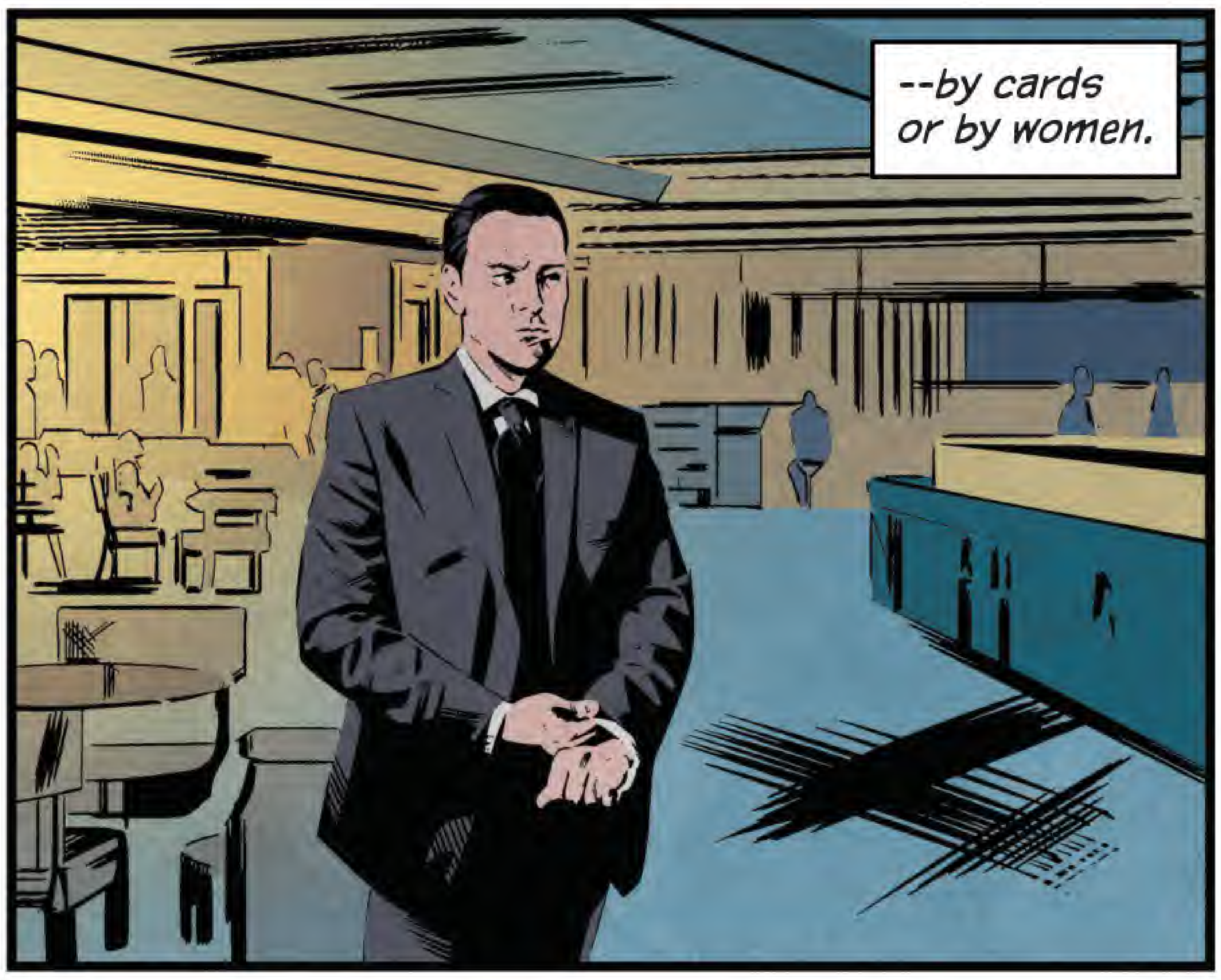
It was Mathis who got to him first, and by that time Bond was standing with his arm around the tree which had saved his life.
As the clang of bells heralded the arrival of ambulances and fire-engines, they managed to push through the throng and up the short stairs to Bond's room.
Mathis had paused only to turn on the radio in front of the fireplace.
Tell the police that the Englishman knocked over by the blast is my affair. They should tell the Press that it was apparently a vendetta between two Bulgarian Communists and that one killed the other with a bomb.
They need say nothing of the third Bulgar. Roadblocks EVERYWHERE. Understand?! *Alors, bonne chance.*
Merde, but you were lucky. Clearly the BOMB was intended for you. It must have been FAULTY.
These people appear to be taking you seriously.
This was becoming a formidable affair. Certainly for Mathis it was no longer just a case of holding Bond's coat while he had his private battle with Le Chiffre.
Get a drink and some lunch and a rest.
For me, I must get my nose quickly into this affair before the police have muddied the trail with their big black boots.

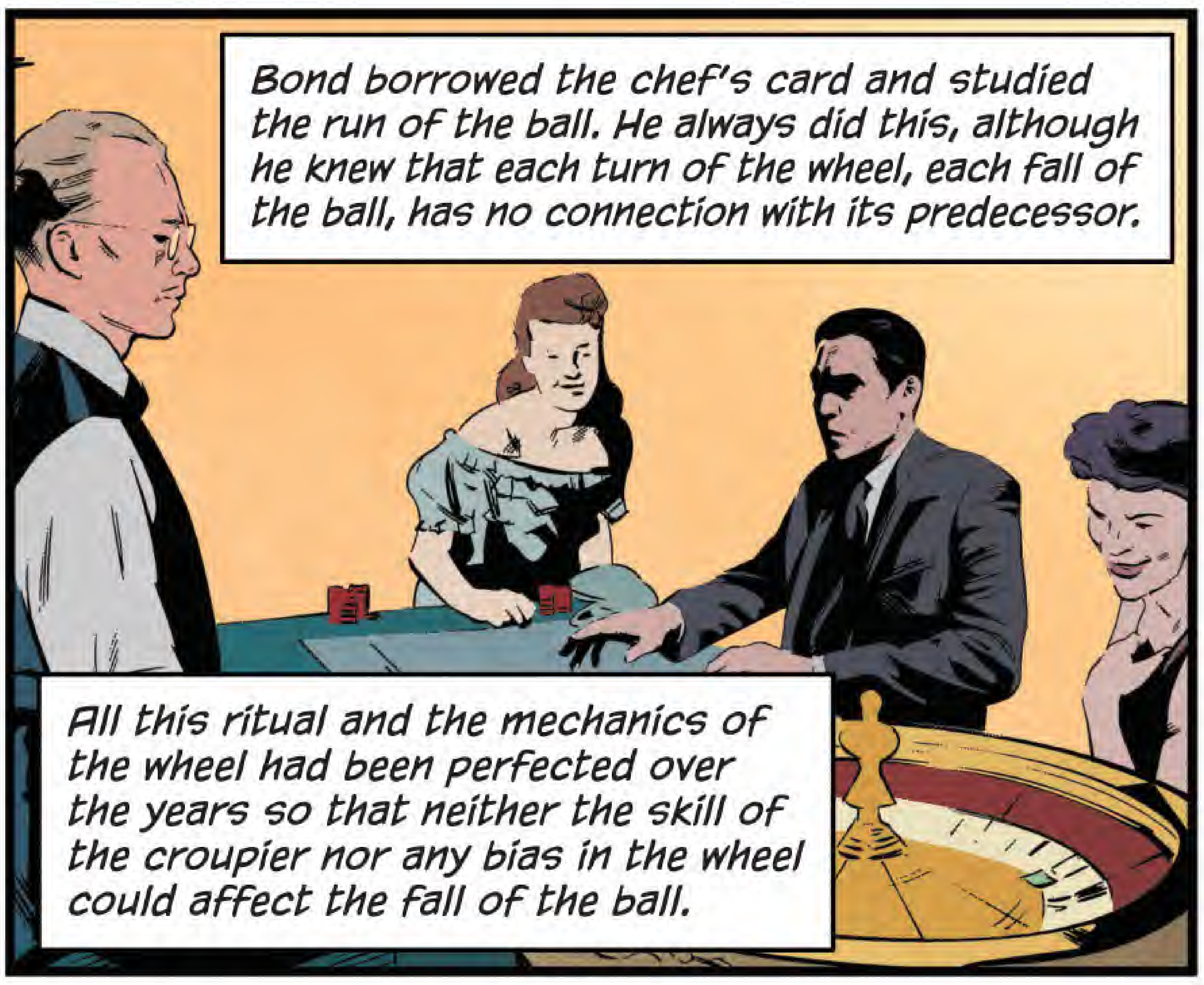
Later, Bond was finishing his first straight whisky 'on the rocks' and was contemplating the paté de foie gras and cold langouste the waiter had laid out for him when...
RRRRINNG
The voice was low and anxious. "This is Mademoiselle Lynd. Are you all right?"
Yes, quite.
"I'm glad. Please take care of yourself." She rang off.
He suddenly thought: Two of them are dead, and I have got one more on my side. It's a start.
He reminded himself to tip the waiter doubly for this particular meal.

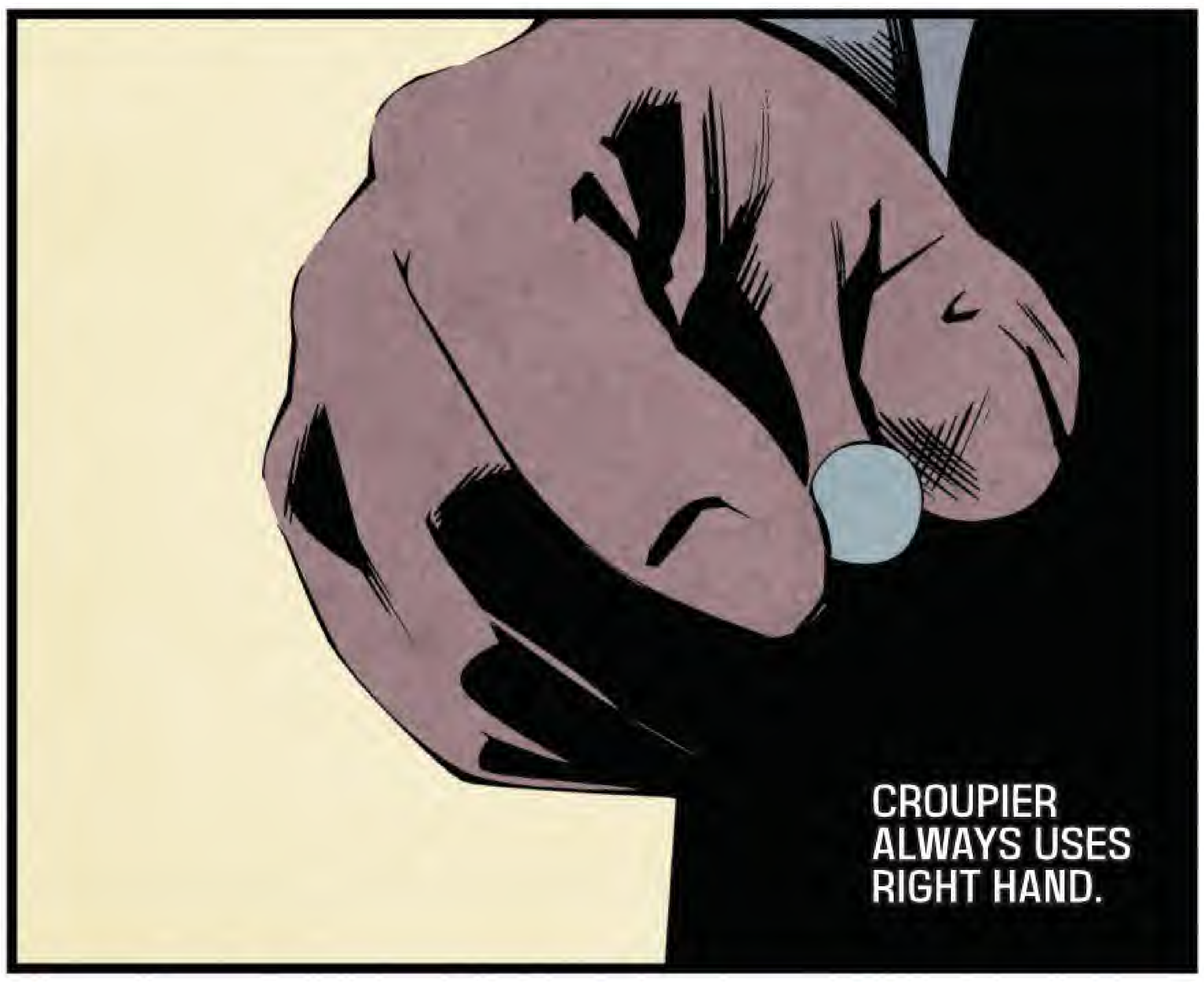
CHAPTER SEVEN:

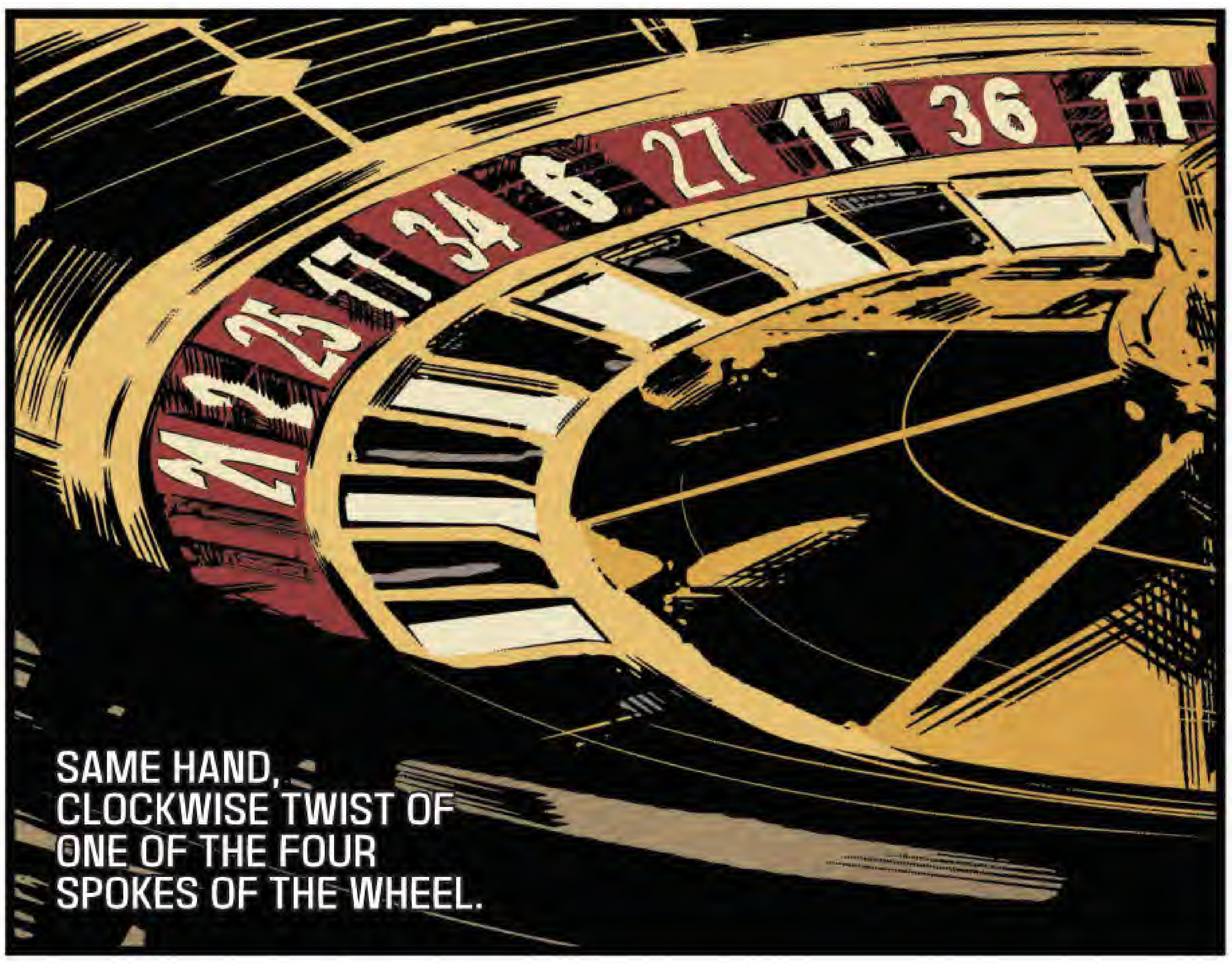
ROUGE ET NOIR

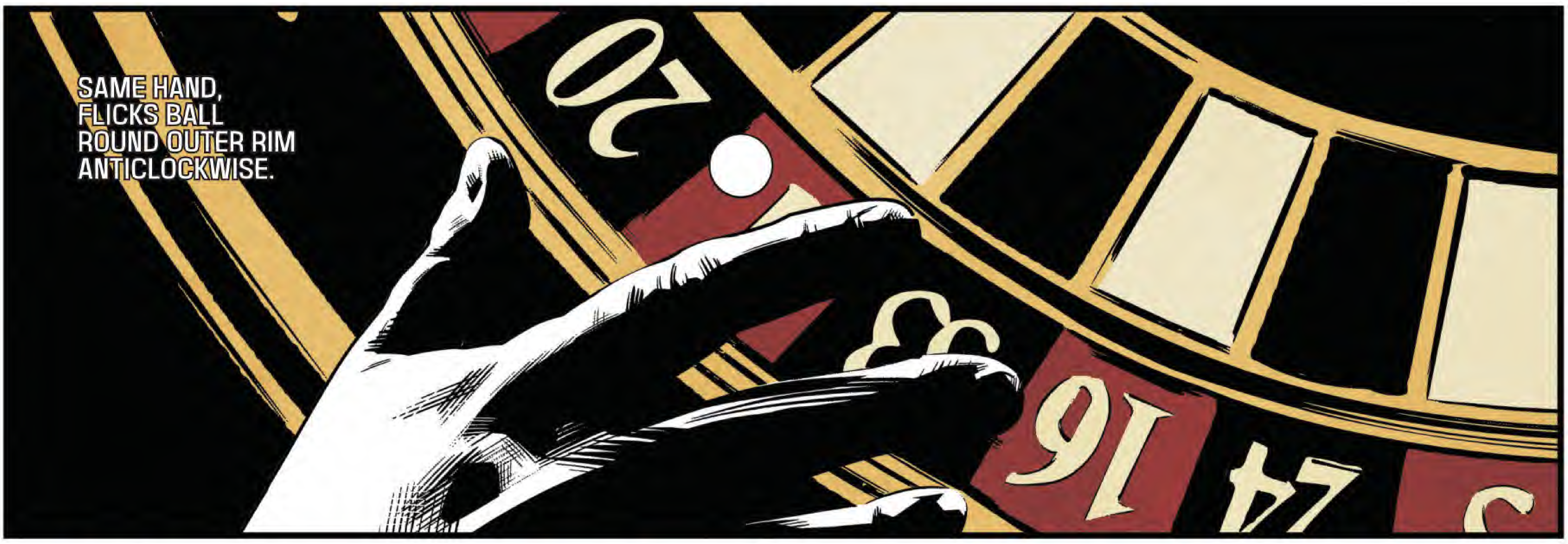

Bond had always been a gambler.
He loved the dry riffle of the cards and the constant unemphatic drama of the quiet figures round the green tables.
He was amused by the impartiality of the roulette ball and of the playing cards--and their eternal bias. He liked being an actor and a spectator in other men's dramas and decisions...
...until it came to his own turn to say that vital "yes" or "no".
Above all, he liked it that everything was one's own fault. There was only oneself to praise or blame. Luck was a servant and not a master.
It had to be understood and not confused with a faulty appreciation of the odds, for, at gambling, the deadly sin is to mistake bad play for bad luck.
D'ENTREE
Luck in all its moods had to be loved and not feared. Bond saw luck as a woman, to be softly wooed or brutally ravaged, never pandered to or pursued.
But he was honest enough to admit that he had never yet been made to suffer--

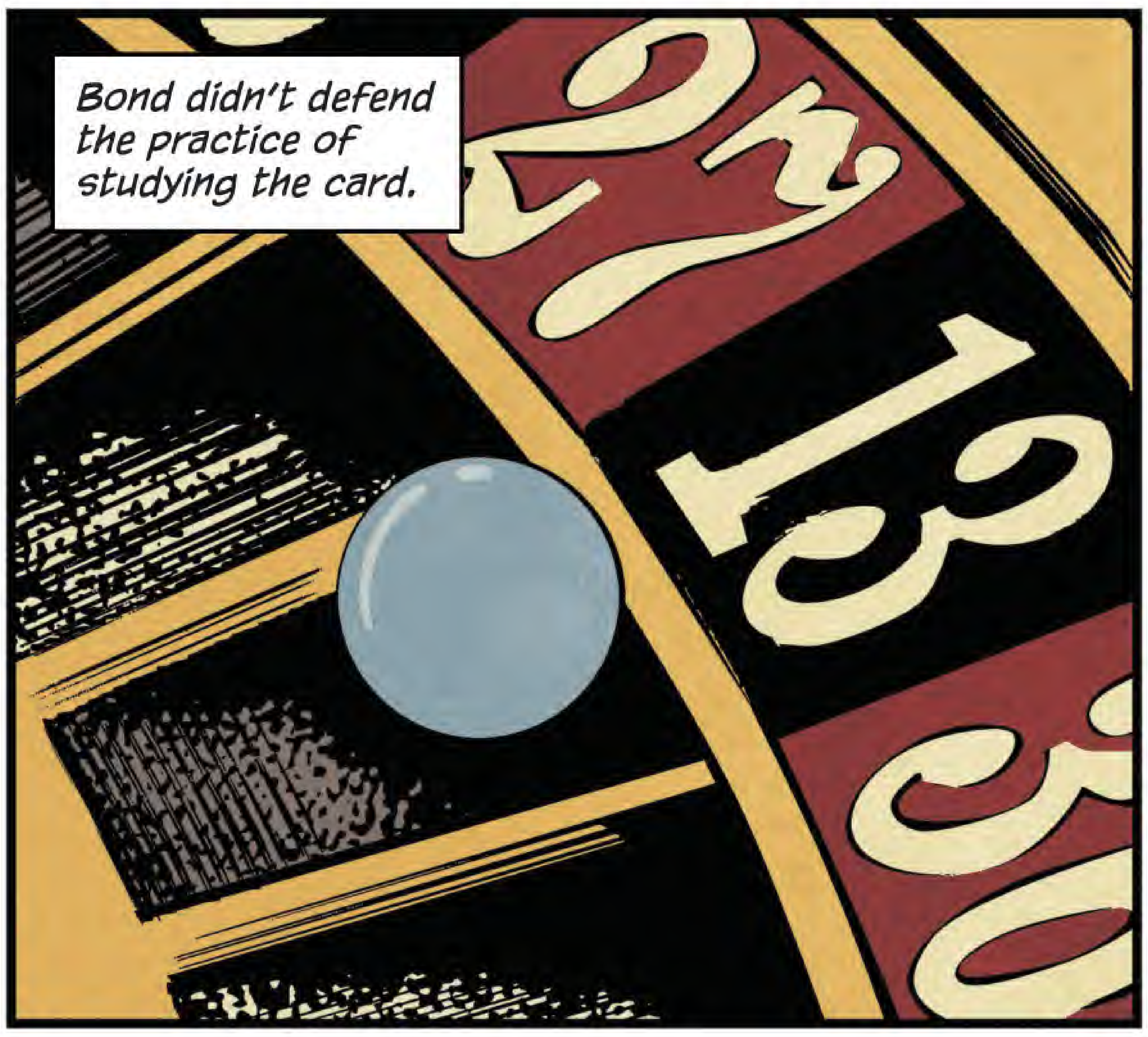

--by cards
or by women.

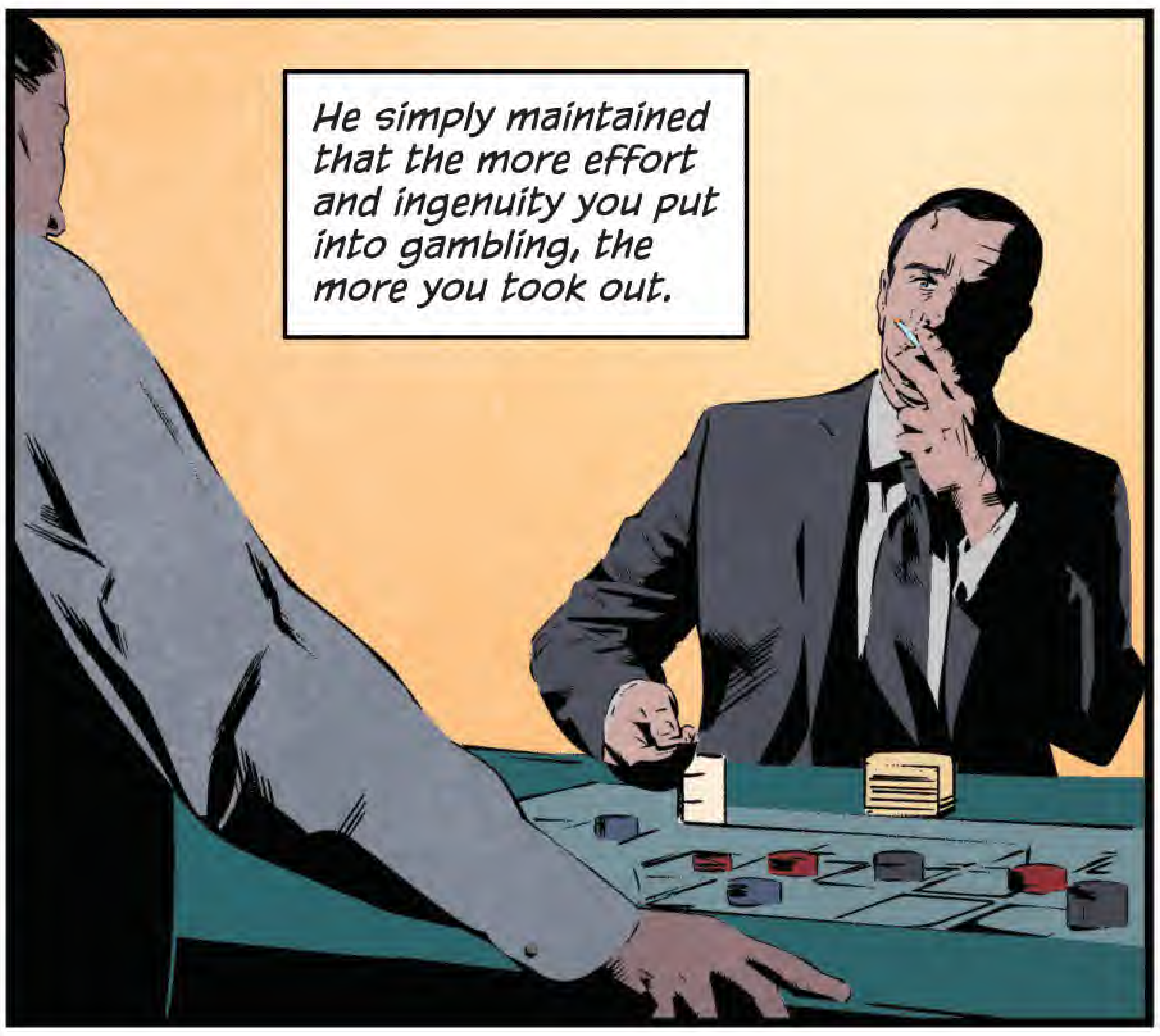

Bond borrowed the chef's card and studied the run of the ball. He always did this, although he knew that each turn of the wheel, each fall of the ball, has no connection with its predecessor.
All this ritual and the mechanics of the wheel had been perfected over the years so that neither the skill of the croupier nor any bias in the wheel could affect the fall of the ball.


CROUPIER ALWAYS USES RIGHT HAND.


SAME HAND, CLOCKWISE TWIST OF ONE OF THE FOUR SPOKES OF THE WHEEL.


SAME HAND, FLICKS BALL ROUND OUTER RIM ANTICLOCKWISE.


Bond didn't defend the practice of studying the card.


He simply maintained that the more effort and ingenuity you put into gambling, the more you took out.

It was his practice to play always with the wheel, and only to turn against its pattern after a zero had turned up. So he decided to back the first two dozens--each with the maximum one hundred thousand francs.

After seven coups he had won six times.

As he seemed to be in luck, a pilot fish started to swim with the shark. There was something pointed in the way he duplicated Bond's movements.

U.S.-MADE CLOTHING, LIKELY AN AMERICAN.
MODEST BETS OF TWENTY MILLE PER TURN.

Bond lost on the seventh when thirty came up.

He kept off the table for the eighth throw.

Zero turned up. This piece of luck cheered him further. Accepting it as a fingerpost to the last dozen, Bond decided to back the first and last dozens.

Ten throws later the middle dozen came up twice, costing him four hundred thousand francs, but he rose from the table one million francs to the good.

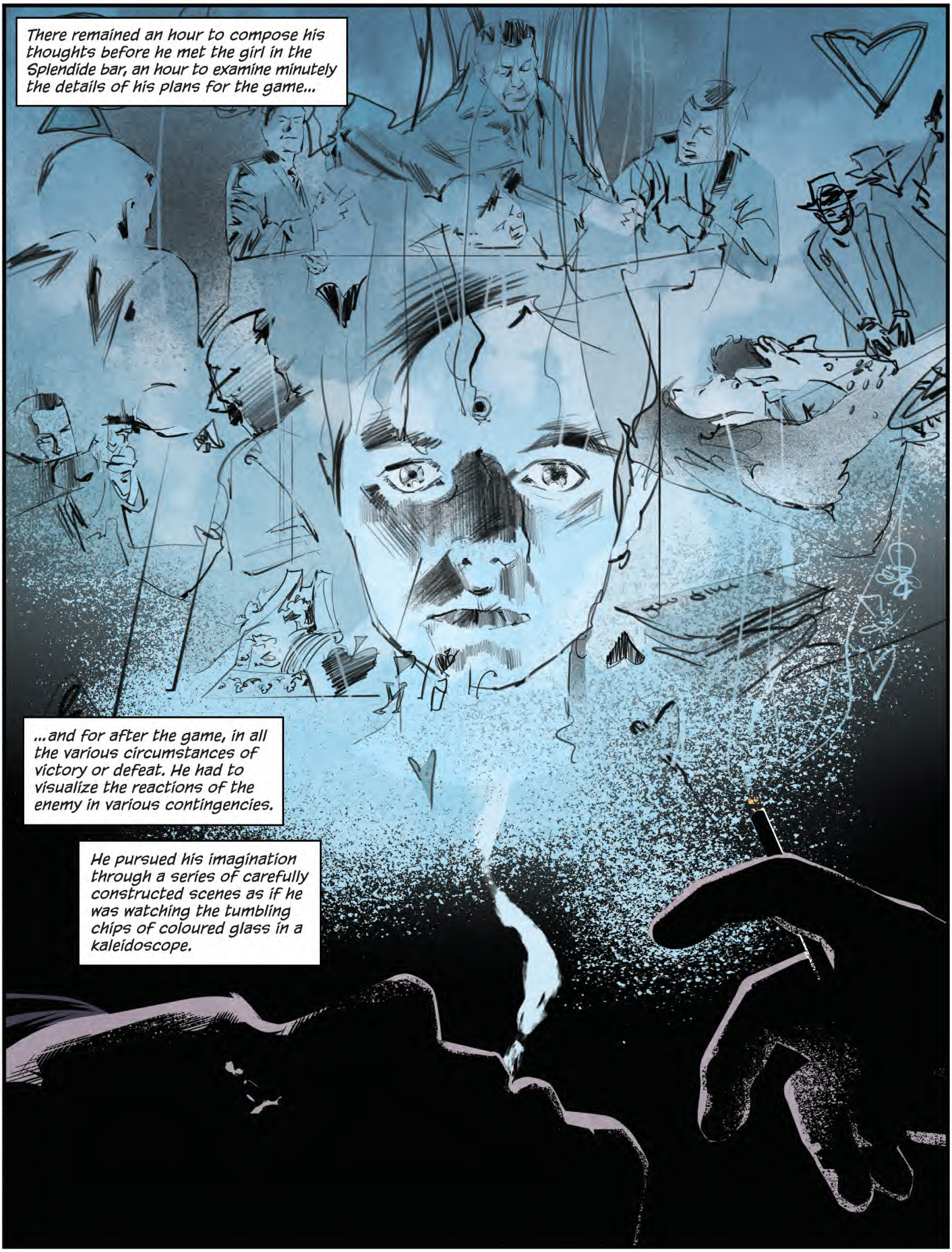
Thanks for the ride. Guess I owe you a drink.
LIKELIHOOD OF BEING THE CIA MAN--51%.

My name's FELIX LEITER. Glad to meet you.
Mine's Bond--JAMES BOND.
Oh yes. And now, let's see. What shall we have to celebrate?
I'll take a Haig-and-Haig on the rocks.
A dry martini. In a deep champagne goblet. Three measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet.
Shake it very well until it's ice-cold, then add a large thin slice of lemon-peel. GOT IT?
Certainly, monsieur.
Gosh, that's certainly a drink.
I never have more than one drink before dinner. But I do like that one to be LARGE and VERY STRONG and VERY COLD and very well-made. I HATE small portions of anything.
This drink's my own invention. I'm going to patent it when I can think of a good name.
You certainly think things out.
You'd better call it the *'Molotov Cocktail'* after the one you tasted this afternoon.
LIKELIHOOD OF BEING THE CIA MAN--100%.

People are accepting the Communist story, or else they think it was a burst gas main. I'm glad to be working with you on this job, so I'm particularly glad you didn't get blown to glory.
Washington's pretty SICK we're not running the show, but you know what the BIG BRASS is like. I expect your fellows are much the same in London.
Apt to be a bit JEALOUS of their scoops.
Anyway, I'm under YOUR orders and I'm to give you ANY help you ask for.
I'm delighted you are. The opposition has got me, and probably you and Mathis too, all weighed up and it seems no holds are going to be barred.
I'm glad Le Chiffre is as DESPERATE as we thought he was.
I've got an assistant, a Miss Lynd, and I'll hand her over to you when I start playing. You might mark his two gunmen. I can't imagine he'll try a rough house, but you never know.
I may be able to help. I was a regular in our Marine Corps before I joined this racket, if that means anything to you.
It does.
It turned out Leiter was from Texas. While he talked on about his job with the Joint Intelligence Staff of NATO, Bond reflected that good Americans were fine people and that most of them came from Texas.
Leiter was about thirty-five. His movements and speech were slow, but one had the feeling that there was plenty of speed and strength in him and that he would be a tough and cruel fighter.
All the burnt trees are coming down tonight...there won't be a trace of the mess left in the morning.
Who's the *concierge* working for?
I'm not sure. Mathis says unless you have bought a *concierge* yourself, you must assume he has been BOUGHT by the other side. They have as much concern for your comfort as CROCODILES.
They parted company at the lift after arranging to see each other at the Casino at around half past ten or eleven...the usual hour for the high tables to begin play.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

PINK LIGHTS AND CHAMPAGNE



There remained an hour to compose his thoughts before he met the girl in the Splendide bar, an hour to examine minutely the details of his plans for the game...
...and for after the game, in all the various circumstances of victory or defeat. He had to visualize the reactions of the enemy in various contingencies.
He pursued his imagination through a series of carefully constructed scenes as if he was watching the tumbling chips of coloured glass in a kaleidoscope.

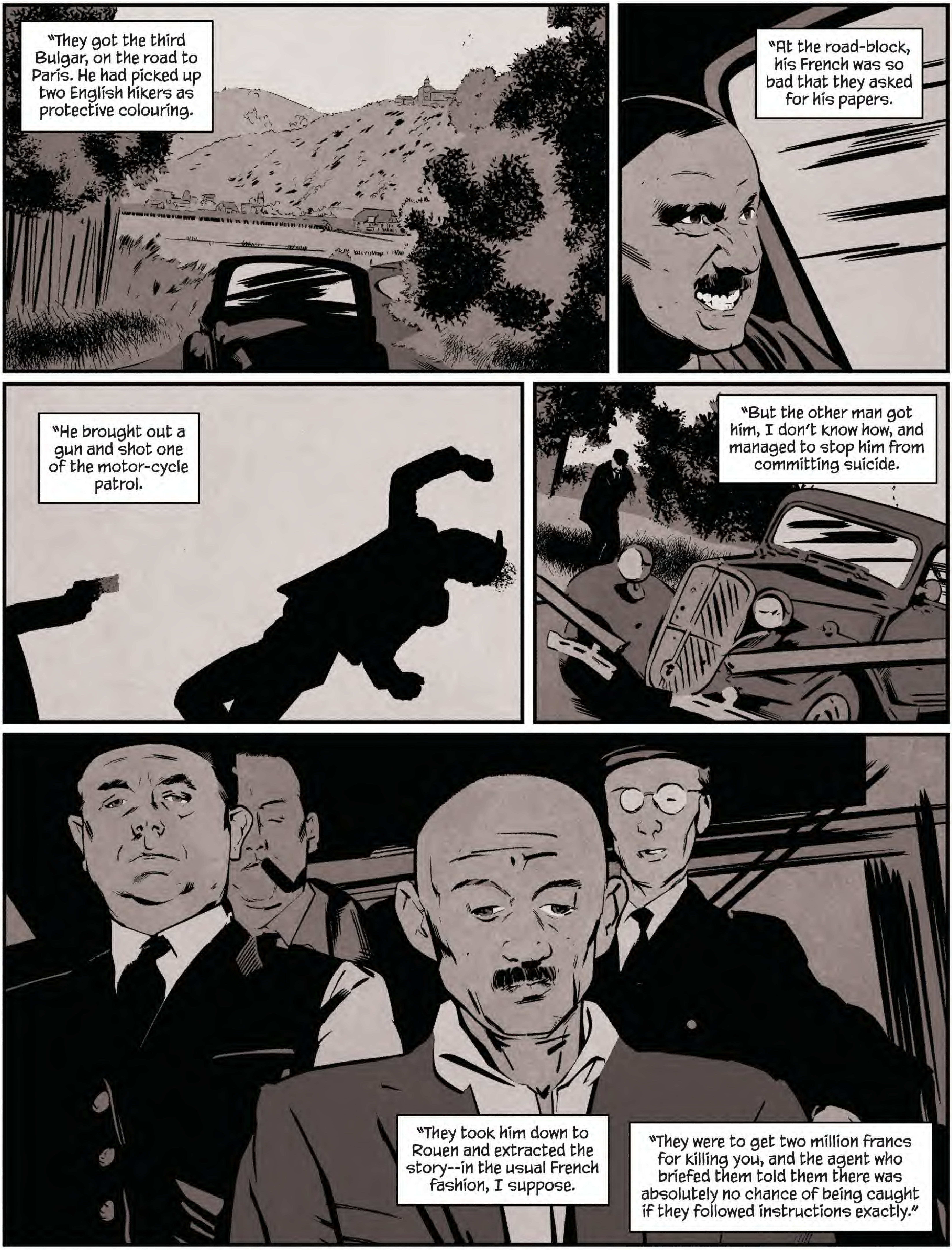
At twenty minutes to nine he had exhausted all the permutations which might result from his duel with Le Chiffre.
.25 BERETTA AUTOMATIC, SKELETON GRIP.
KLACK
CHAK CHAK CHAK CHAK
KLIK

Good evening.
You look absolutely lovely. Business must be good in the radio world!
Do you mind if we go straight into dinner? There's a HORRIBLE SECRET about black velvet. It MARKS when you sit down.
And, by the way, if you hear me SCREAM tonight, I shall have sat on a CANE CHAIR.
Of course, let's go straight in. We'll have a glass of vodka while we order our dinner.
...or a cocktail, of course, if you prefer it.
For an instant he felt nettled at the light shadow of a snub with which she'd met his decisiveness, but it was only an infinitesimal clink of foils...forgotten as Bond watched the heads of the diners turn to look at her.

I can't drink the health of your new frock without knowing your Christian name.
Vesper. Vesper Lynd.
I was born in the evening--on a very stormy evening according to my parents. Some people like it, others don't. I'm just used to it.
I think it's a fine name.
Can I borrow it? I invented a martini, but I need a name for it. *"The Vesper."* Sounds perfect for the violet hour when it will now be drunk all over the world.
So long as I can try one first.
Now, here's luck for tonight, Vesper.
Yes. I hope all will go well tonight.
TINK
I have some news for you, from MATHIS. He was longing to tell you himself. It's about the bomb--a FANTASTIC story.
Tell me.

CHAPTER NINE:

THE GAME IS BACCARAT


"They got the third Bulgar, on the road to Paris. He had picked up two English hikers as protective colouring.
"At the road-block, his French was so bad that they asked for his papers.
"He brought out a gun and shot one of the motor-cycle patrol.
"But the other man got him, I don't know how, and managed to stop him from committing suicide.
"They took him down to Rouen and extracted the story--in the usual French fashion, I suppose.
"They were to get two million francs for killing you, and the agent who briefed them told them there was absolutely no chance of being caught if they followed instructions exactly."

But THIS is the interesting part. The agent gave them the two camera-cases you saw.
"He told them that the blue case contained a powerful smoke-bomb. The red one was the explosive. As one threw the red case, the other was to press a switch on the blue case and they would escape under the cover of the smoke.
"In fact, the smoke-bomb was a pure invention to make the Bulgars think they could get away. Both cases contained an identical high explosive bomb.
"The idea was to destroy you and the bomb-throwers without trace. But the Bulgars cannily decided to take no chances.
"They decided to touch off the smoke-bomb first and, from inside the cloud, hurl the explosive bomb at you.
"Of course, they both went up together.
The police picked up some fragments of the unexploded RED BOMB and confronted the THIRD MAN with them. When he saw that they had been TRICKED, he started to talk. But there's NOTHING to link all this with Le Chiffre.
It's VERY satisfactory to be a CORPSE who changes places with his MURDERERS.

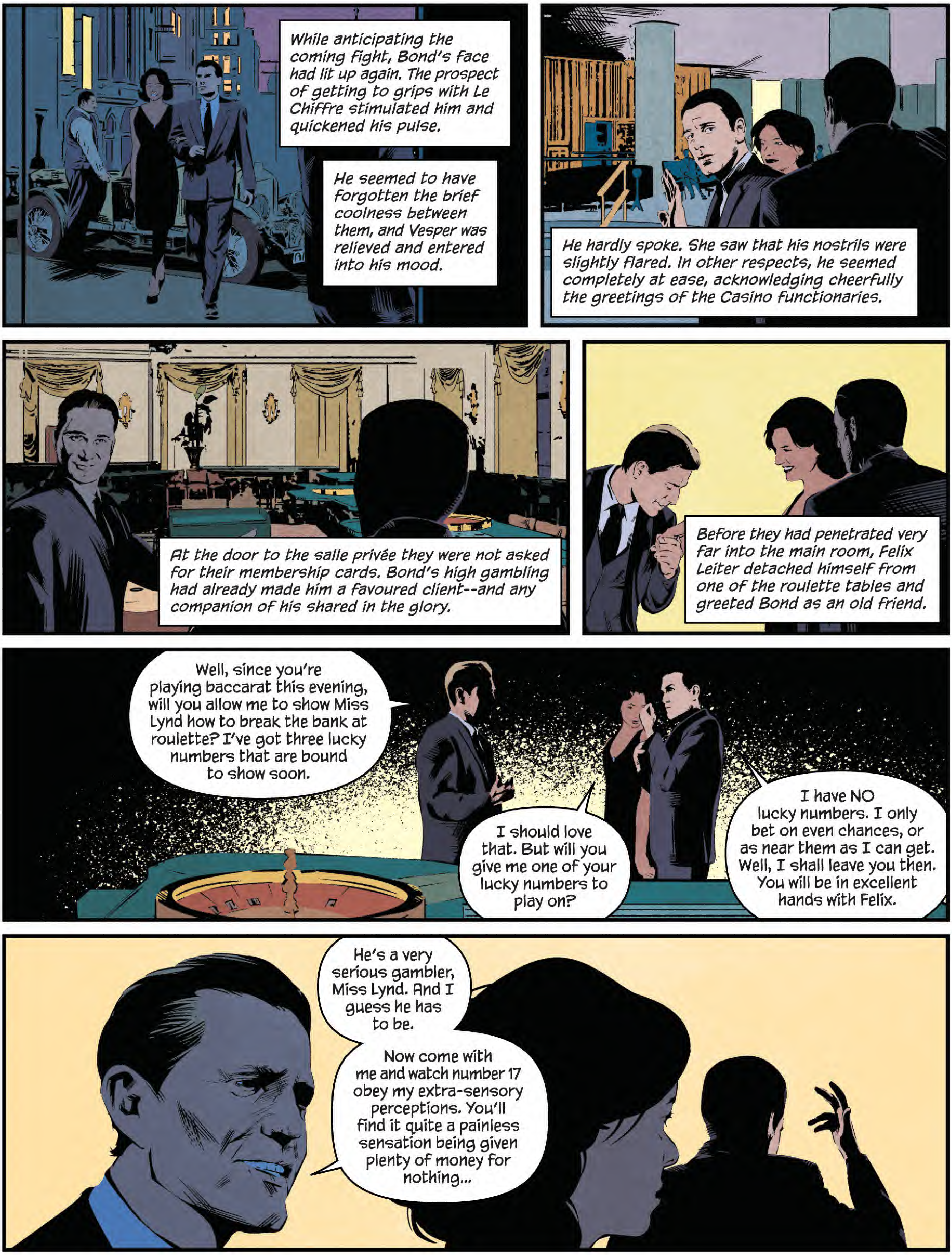
How did you come to get mixed up in this affair? What section are you in?
I'm personal assistant to Head of S. As it was his plan, he wanted his section to have a hand in the operation.
M said yes...although he told my chief that you would be furious at being given a woman to work with.
The office was very jealous. All they knew was that I was to work with a Double O. Of course you're our heroes. I was enchanted.
It's not difficult to get a Double O number if you're prepared to kill people. That's all the meaning it has.
I've got the corpses of a Japanese cipher expert in New York and a Norwegian double agent in Stockholm to thank for being a Double O. Probably quite decent people.
It's a confusing business but if it's one's profession, one does what one's told.

How do you like the grated egg with your caviar?
It's a WONDERFUL combination. I'm LOVING my dinner. It seems a shame...
Let's consider what has to be done. I'd better explain what I'M going to try and do and how YOU can help--
--which isn't going to be VERY MUCH I'm afraid.
Baccarat is much the same as any other gambling game. The odds against the banker and the player are more or less even. Only a run against either can be decisive.
Le Chiffre's capital is TWENTY-FOUR MILLION. I have about the same. There will be ten players, I expect...
The banker sits there in the middle with a croupier to rake in the cards and call the amount of each bank and a *chef de partie* to umpire the game.
In front of the banker is a shoe containing six packs of cards, well shuffled. There's no chance of tampering with the shoe. The cards are shuffled by the croupier and cut by one of the players.
The banker announces an opening bet of five hundred thousand francs. Each seat is numbered from the right of the banker. Number one can accept the bet and push money out, or pass it.
I shall always try and step in and accept the bet--in fact, I shall attack Le Chiffre's bank whenever I get a chance until either I've bust his bank or he's bust me.
In the end, one of us is bound to break the other. Being the banker, he's got a slight advantage. But knowing I'm making a dead set at him and not knowing my capital is bound to play on his nerves a bit.
So I'm hoping that we start about equal.

I get two cards and the banker gets two.
CIGARETTE NO. 38 TODAY.
The object is to hold two or three cards which together count nine points, or as nearly nine as possible.
Court cards and tens count nothing; aces one each; any other card its face value. It is only the last figure of your count that signifies. So nine plus seven equals six--not sixteen.
Q
7
0 POINTS
7 POINTS
If my cards add up to eight or nine, they're a *"natural"* and I win, unless he has an equal or better natural. If I haven't, I can perhaps ask for a card or not.
Only when I ask for a card or tap mine to signify I stand can the banker look at his. If I call for a card, it's dealt face up. On its value and a knowledge of the odds, he will know whether to take another card or to stand on his own.
10
9
0 POINTS
9 POINTS
There is always one problem card at this game--shall one draw or stand on a five? And what will your opponent do with a five? Some players always draw or always stand.
I follow my intuition.
5
5
But in the end, it's the natural eights and nines that matter, and I must just see that I get MORE of them than he does.

CHAPTER TEN:

THE HIGH TABLE


While anticipating the coming fight, Bond's face had lit up again. The prospect of getting to grips with Le Chiffre stimulated him and quickened his pulse.
He seemed to have forgotten the brief coolness between them, and Vesper was relieved and entered into his mood.
He hardly spoke. She saw that his nostrils were slightly flared. In other respects, he seemed completely at ease, acknowledging cheerfully the greetings of the Casino functionaries.
At the door to the salle privée they were not asked for their membership cards. Bond's high gambling had already made him a favoured client--and any companion of his shared in the glory.
Before they had penetrated very far into the main room, Felix Leiter detached himself from one of the roulette tables and greeted Bond as an old friend.
Well, since you're playing baccarat this evening, will you allow me to show Miss Lynd how to break the bank at roulette? I've got three lucky numbers that are bound to show soon.
I should love that. But will you give me one of your lucky numbers to play on?
I have NO lucky numbers. I only bet on even chances, or as near them as I can get. Well, I shall leave you then. You will be in excellent hands with Felix.
He's a very serious gambler, Miss Lynd. And I guess he has to be.
Now come with me and watch number 17 obey my extra-sensory perceptions. You'll find it quite a painless sensation being given plenty of money for nothing...

Bond was relieved to be on his own again and to be able to clear his mind of everything but the task on hand.

He stood at the caisse and took his twenty-four million francs against the receipt which had been given him that afternoon.

He divided the notes into equal packets and put half the sum into his right-hand coat pocket and the other half into the left.

12 MILLION FRANCS
12 MILLION FRANCS
I've kept Number 6 as you wished, Monsieur Bond.

He knew most of the players by sight, but few of their names. Bond asked the huissier for a card and wrote on it, under a neat question mark, the remaining seat numbers. Soon it came back with the names filled in.

NO. 1. THE GREEK. PROFITABLE SHIPPING LINE. WILL PLAY COLDLY. A STAYER.

NO. 2. CARMEL DELANE. AMERICAN FILM STAR. ALIMONY FROM THREE HUSBANDS. WILL PLAY GAILY AND WITH PANACHE.

NO. 3. LADY DANVERS. AMERICAN. RICH. PREDATORY MOUTH OF A BARRACUDA.

NO. 4. MR. DU PONT. RICH-LOOKING. REAL DU PONT MONEY BEHIND HIM?

NO. 5. MRS. DU PONT. BUSINESS-LIKE. CHEERFUL. A GOOD SEAT-MATE.

NO. 7. MONSIEUR SIXTE. WEALTHY. BELGIAN. METAL INTERESTS IN THE CONGO.

NO. 8. MAHARAJAH OF A SMALL INDIAN STATE. WARTIME STERLING TO PLAY WITH. LIKELY TO STAND SOME HEAVY LOSSES.

NO. 9. LORD DANVERS. DISTINGUISHED BUT WEAK. FRANCS PRESUMABLY FROM HIS RICH AMERICAN WIFE AT NO. 3.

NO. 10. SIGNOR TOMELLI. PLENTY OF MONEY FROM RACKRENTS IN MILAN. DASHING AND FOOLISH. MIGHT LOSE HIS TEMPER.

Bond sat down with a nod to the players on his right and left.
Bond had just finished his sketchy summing-up of the players when...
CIGARETTE No. 40 TODAY.
...Le Chiffre came through with the silence and economy of movement of a big fish.
With a cold smile of welcome for the table, he took his place opposite Bond in the banker's chair.
With the same economy of movement, he cut the thick slab of cards between his blunt relaxed hands.
As the croupier fitted the six packs with one swift exact motion into the metal and wooden shoe, Le Chiffre said something quietly to him.

Messieurs, mesdames, les jeux sont faits.
Un banco de cinq-cent mille.
Le banco es fait.

Le Chiffre gave the shoe a deliberate slap to settle the cards, the first of which showed its semicircular pale pink tongue through the slanting aluminum mouth of the shoe.

He pressed gently on the pink tongue and slipped out the first card six inches towards the Greek. Then he slipped out a card for himself, then another for the Greek, then one more for himself.

The croupier delicately lifted up the Greek's two cards and dropped them with a quick movement, so that they lay just before the Greek's hands, inert like two watchful pink crabs.

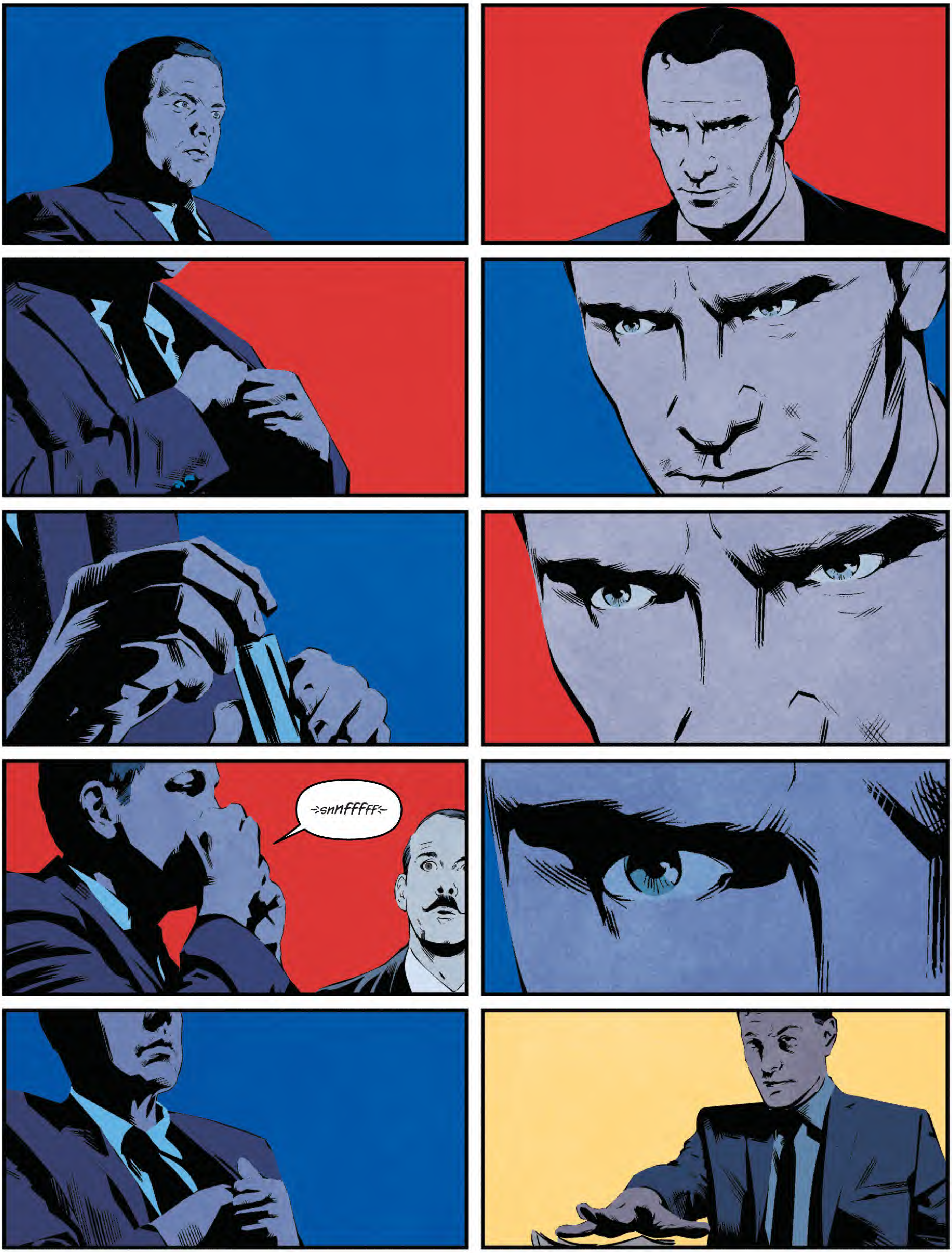
From the decision to stand, it was clear the Greek had a five, or a six, or a seven.

To be certain of winning, the banker had to reveal an eight or a nine.

An undefeatable natural nine. He had won.
The croupier lifted gently the two corpses of the seven and queen and slipped them through the wide slot in the table which leads into the metal canister to which all dead cards are consigned.
Neuf à la banque... et le sept.
Un banco d'un million.
The Greek pushed forward five plaques of one hundred thousand and the croupier added these to Le Chiffre's half-million plaque, which lay in the centre of the table.
The Greek exercised his right to follow up his lost bet. The long game was launched and this subdued litany would continue until the end came and the players dispersed.
Suivi.
Then the enigmatic cards would be burnt or defaced, a shroud would be draped over the table and the grass-green baize battlefield would soak up the blood of the victims and refresh itself.
The Greek, after taking a third card, could achieve no better than a four to the bank's seven.
Un banco de deux millions.
The players on Bond's left remained silent.
Banco.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

MOMENT OF TRUTH



Ehn.
Le baccarat.

I shouldn't have let it come to you. Directly the cards were dealt I kicked myself.
It's only the beginning of the game. You may be right the next time you pass it.
If one could be right EVERY hand, NONE of us would be here.
I WOULD BE! You don't think I do this for pleasure.
As the game went on--uneventful but with a slight bias against the bank--Bond looked over the spectators. He soon saw Le Chiffre's two gunmen.
EYES OF A CONJURER. INHUMAN. DRUG USE. MARIHUANA, MOST LIKELY.
RESTLESS HANDS. WILL KILL WITHOUT CONCERN. A STRANGLER.
BAD TEETH. DARK SKIN. CORSICAN?
MALACCA CANE. THE CASINO FORBIDS STICKS WITHOUT PERMISSION. A CRIPPLE?
Neither the bank nor any of the players seemed to be able to get hot. But there was a steady and inexorable seepage against the bank, amounting after two hours' play to ten million francs.
Bond had no idea what profits Le Chiffre had made over the past two days. He estimated them at five million and guessed that now the banker's capital could not be more than twenty million.
In fact, Le Chiffre had lost heavily all afternoon. He only had ten million left. Bond had won four million, bringing his resources to twenty-eight million.

Bond was cautiously pleased.
Le Chiffre continued to play like an automaton, never speaking except when he gave instructions in a low aside to the croupier.
In the background there thudded always the hidden metronome of the Casino, ticking up its little treasure of one-per-cents with each spin of the wheel and each turn of a card--
--a pulsing fat-cat with a zero for a heart.
Then the whole pattern of play suddenly altered.
The Greek lost the first coup of half a million francs and the second. He passed the third time, leaving a bank of two million.
Carmel Delane at Number 2 refused it. So did Lady Danvers at Number 3.

Banco.
Mrs Du Pont promptly lost to the banker's natural eight.
Un banco de quatre millions.
Banco.
No.
5 POINTS.
MARGINAL.
REFUSE 3rd CARD.
POSITION:
DANGEROUS
4 POINTS.
THIRD CARD...

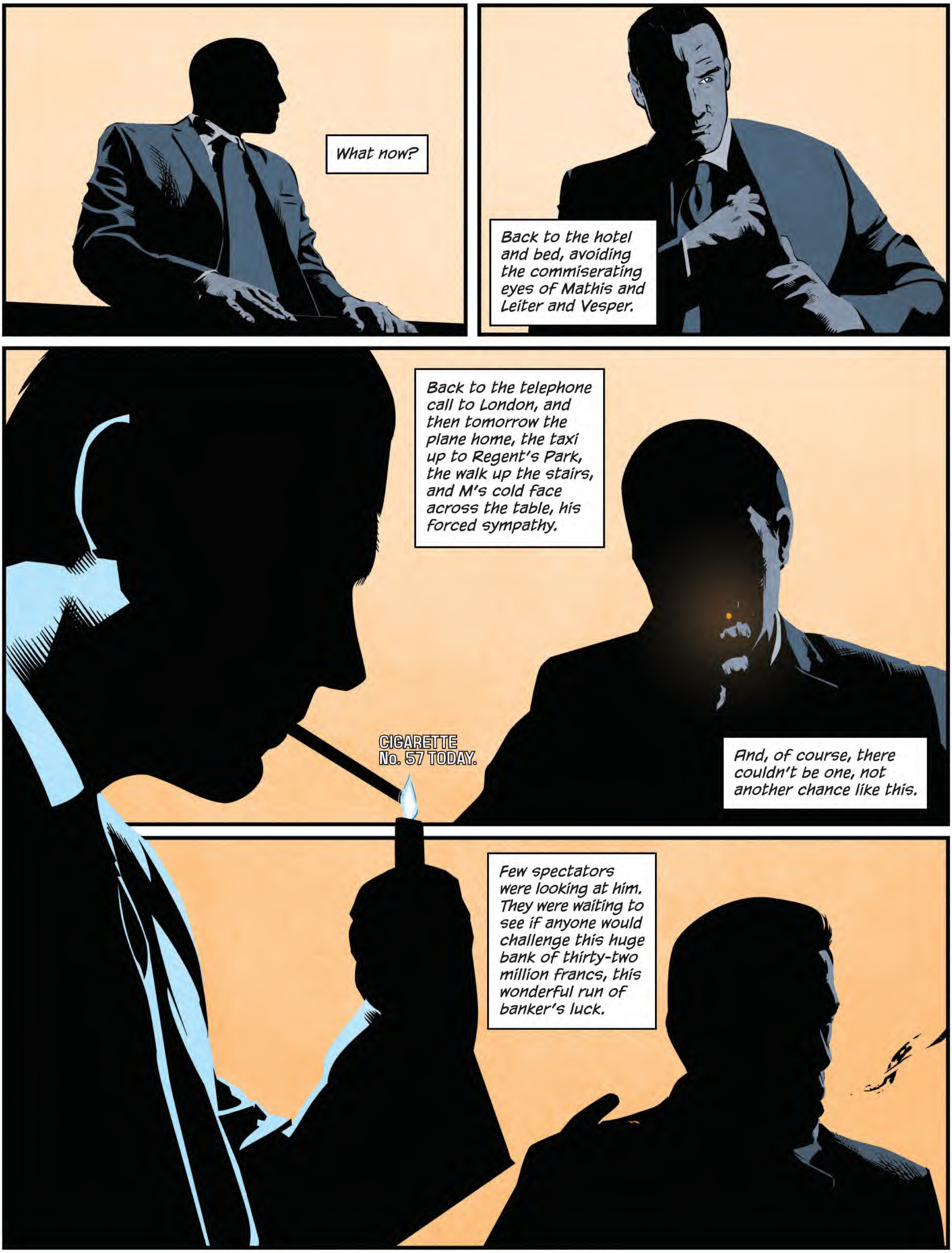
Sept à la banque.
Un banco de huit millions.
Suivi.
Bond lost again, to a natural nine.
In two coups he had lost twelve million francs. By scraping the barrel, he had just sixteen million francs left, exactly the amount of the next banco.
Suivi.

Le jeu est fait.
KING AND ACE. 1 POINT. PROSPECT OF VICTORY: 13%
A card.
QUEEN AND FIVE. 5 POINTS.

The table was absolutely silent.
ACE AND FIVE. 6 POINTS. PROSPECT OF VICTORY: 65%
It was a good card, but to Bond it was a difficult fingerprint in dried blood.
The banker must draw a one, two, three or four. Drawing any other card he would be defeated.
It was, unnecessarily, the best, a four, giving the bank a count of nine. He had won, almost slowing up.
Bond was beaten and cleaned out.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

THE DEADLY TUBE


What now?
Back to the hotel and bed, avoiding the commiserating eyes of Mathis and Leiter and Vesper.
Back to the telephone call to London, and then tomorrow the plane home, the taxi up to Regent's Park, the walk up the stairs, and M's cold face across the table, his forced sympathy.
And, of course, there couldn't be one, not another chance like this.
CIGARETTE No. 57 TODAY.
Few spectators were looking at him. They were waiting to see if anyone would challenge this huge bank of thirty-two million francs, this wonderful run of banker's luck.

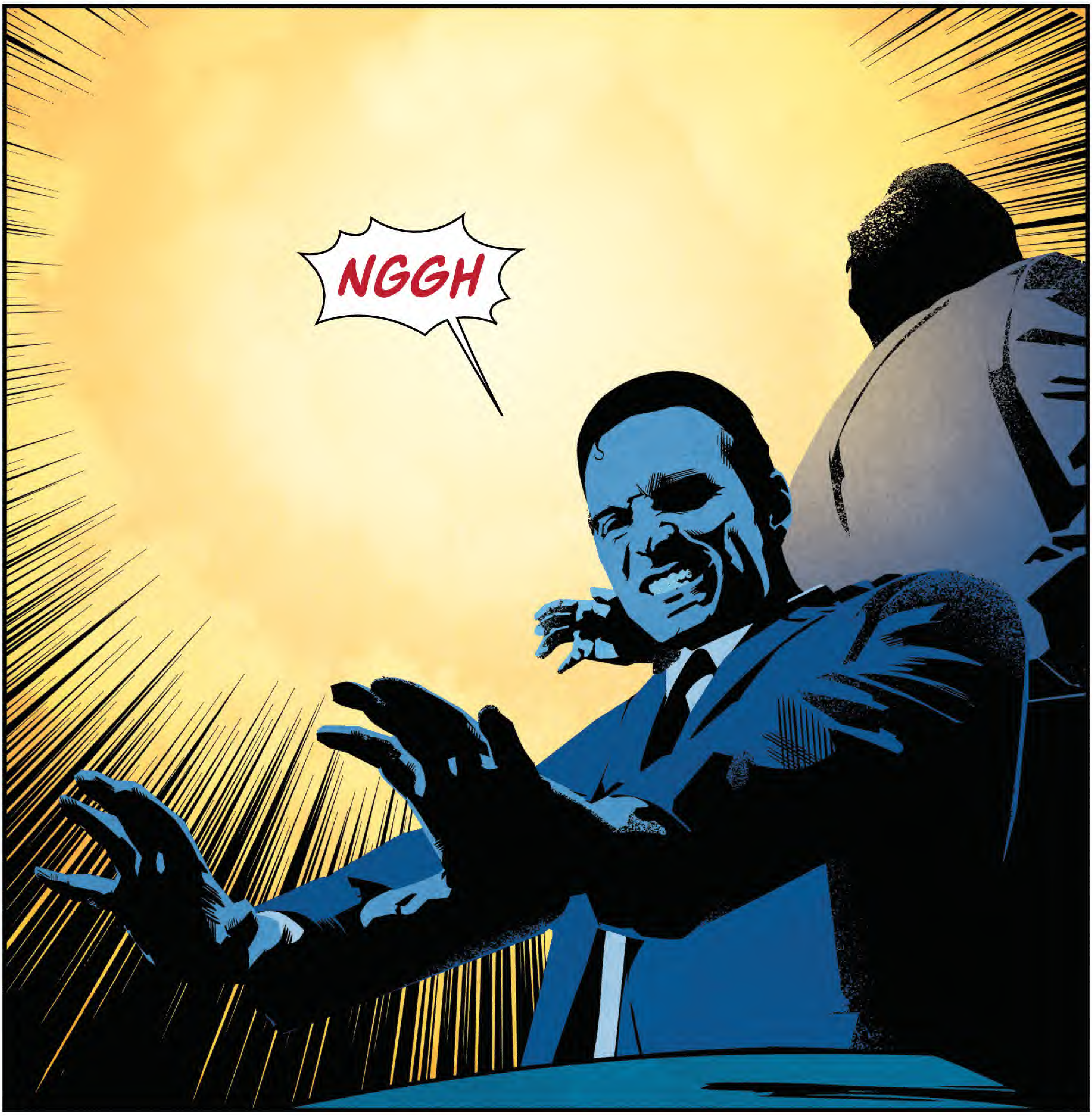
Leiter had vanished, not wishing to look Bond in the eye after the knock-out, he supposed. Yet Vesper looked curiously unmoved.
But then, Bond reflected, she knew nothing of the game. Had no notion, probably, of the bitterness of his defeat.
Hn?
The huissier approached Bond.
SEAL STILL WET.
10000 FR
FRANCS. HOW MUCH? WHERE...?
10000 FRS
488
Marshall Aid.
Thirty-two million francs.
With the compliments of the USA.

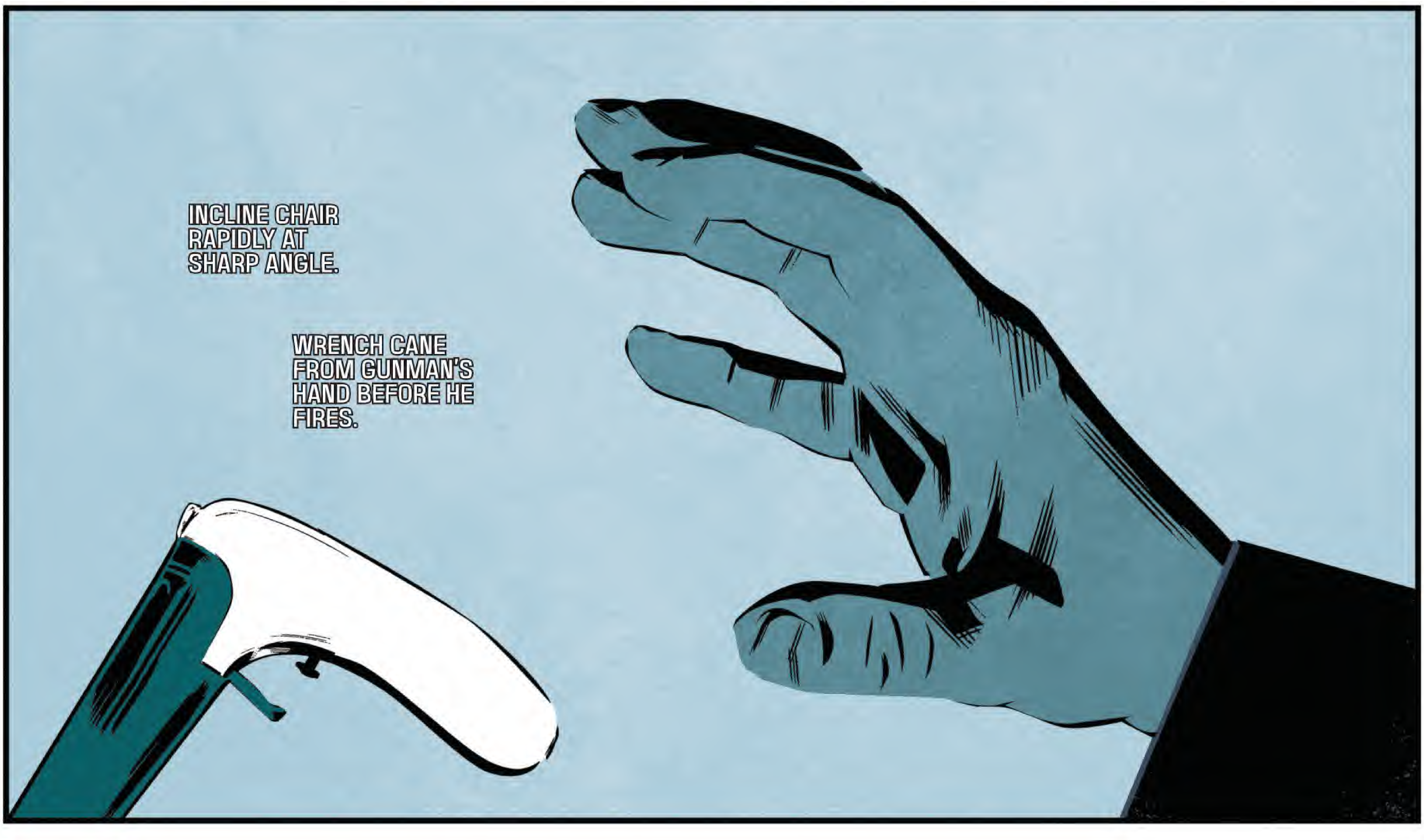
Felix.
Bond set his mind to sweeping away all traces of the sense of complete defeat which had swamped him a few minutes before. This was a reprieve, but only a reprieve.
There could be no more miracles.
Perhaps, thought Bond, Le Chiffre needed just one more coup, even a minor one of a few million francs, to make his fifty million francs and leave the table.
But he showed no signs of moving and Bond guessed with relief that he had overestimated Le Chiffre's resources.
Le Chiffre would hate to see more than ten or fifteen million of the stake covered, and he could not possibly expect anyone to banco the entire thirty-two million.
THE STAKE: 32 MILLION. ONLY ONCE REACHED BEFORE IN DEAUVILLE, 1950.
He might not know that Bond had been cleaned out, but he must imagine that Bond had by now only small reserves. He could not know the contents of the envelope; if he did, he would probably withdraw the bank and start all over.
Then the only hope was to stamp on him now. Not to share the bank with the table, but to go whole hog.

Un banco de trente-deux millions.
UN BANCO DE TRENTE-DEUX MILLIONS!
Suivi.
There was an excited buzz around the table. People crowded in. Thirty-two million! For most, it was more than they had earned all their lives. It was, literally, a small fortune.
Excusez-moi, monsieur. La mise? Mes excuses, Monsieur Bond.
The chef de partie indicated that Bond really must show he had the money. It sometimes happened that desperate people would bet without a sou in the world and cheerfully go to prison if they lost.

Here.
As the croupier busied himself with counting the pinned sheaves of ten thousand franc notes, Bond caught a swift exchange of glances between Le Chiffre--
--and his gunman, now standing directly behind Bond.
The thick walking stick was explained. A gun, concealed.
A SERIES OF RUBBER BAFFLES TO ABSORB THE DETONATION BUT ALLOW THE BULLET TO PASS THROUGH.
INVENTED AND USED IN THE WAR FOR ASSASSINATION. BOND HAD TESTED THEM HIMSELF.
This is a gun, monsieur. It can blow the base of your spine off without a sound. You will appear to have fainted, and I shall be gone. Withdraw your bet before I count ten.
If you call for help I shall fire.

Un.
Deux.
Trois.
"Quatre.
"Cinq."
Six.
Sept.


NGGH

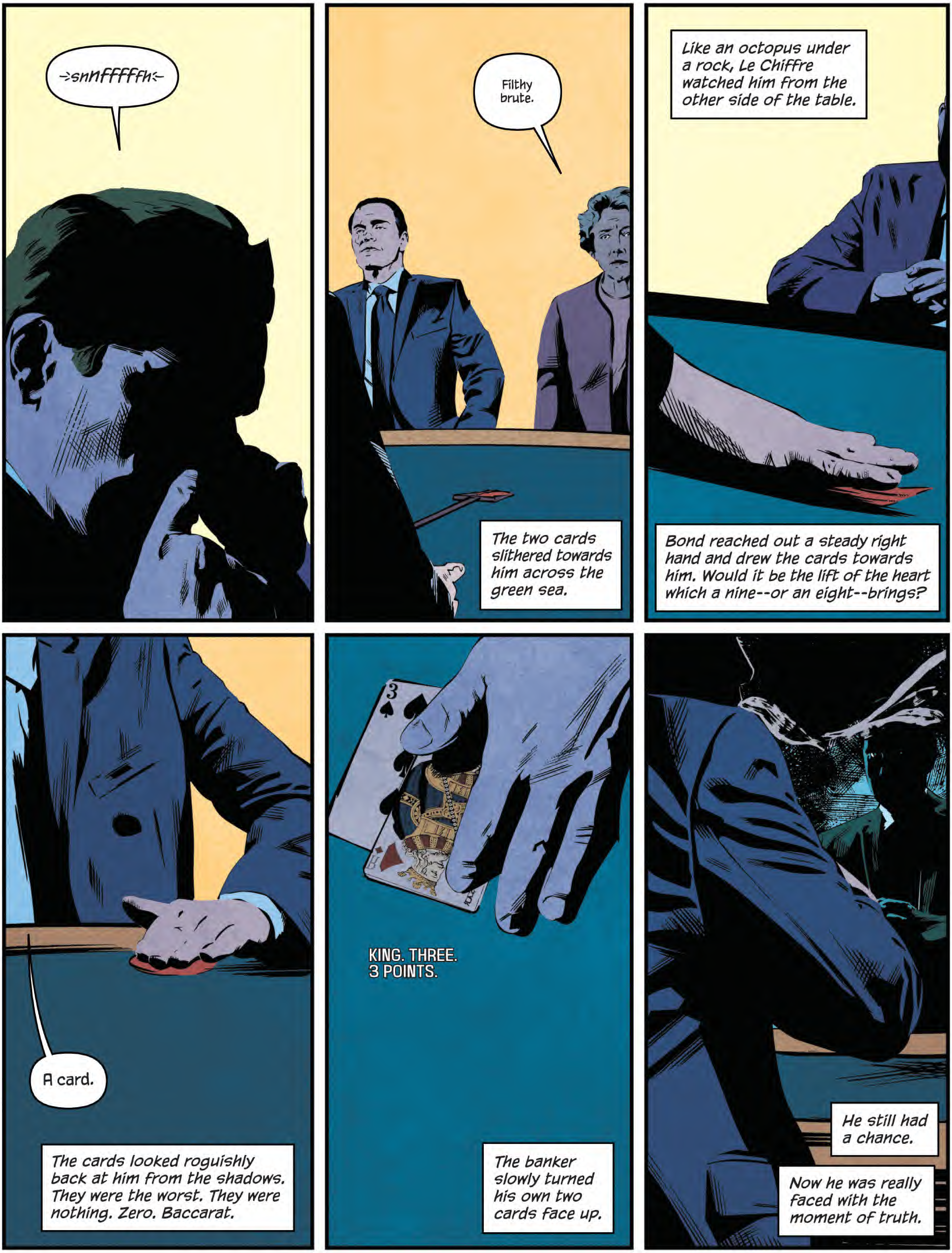

INCLINE CHAIR RAPIDLY AT SHARP ANGLE.
WRENCH CANE FROM GUNMAN'S HAND BEFORE HE FIRES.

The spectators cringed away and then, reassured, clustered back. Hands helped him to his feet and brushed him down.
The huissier bustled up with the chef de partie. At all costs a scandal must be avoided.
There were expressions of sympathy. Naturally, with this tremendous game. Would monsieur prefer to withdraw, to lie down, to go home? Should a doctor be fetched?
A momentary faintness. It is NOTHING-- the excitement, the heat.
Bond shook his head. He was perfectly all right now. His excuses to the table.
To the banker also.

There was a buzz of speculation round the table. Bond's neighbours on both sides of him bent forward and spoke solicitously about the heat and the lateness of the hour and the smoke and the lack of air.
Bond replied politely.
Someone has lost a cane. Would you please claim--
If you will give it to that gentleman over there...
...he will return it. It belongs to an ACQUAINTANCE of his.
Bond's mind was clear again.
He had made a fool of himself, but the success of his gambit with the chair had wiped out all memories of the dreadful valley of defeat through which he had just passed.
La partie continue! Un banco de trente-deux millions.
The cards were waiting for him in the shoe. They must not fail him.
He felt his heart lift at the prospect of what was to come.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

'A WHISPER OF LOVE, A WHISPER OF HATE'


~snnfffffh~
Filthy brute.
The two cards slithered towards him across the green sea.
Like an octopus under a rock, Le Chiffre watched him from the other side of the table.
Bond reached out a steady right hand and drew the cards towards him. Would it be the lift of the heart which a nine--or an eight--brings?
A card.
The cards looked roguishly back at him from the shadows. They were the worst. They were nothing. Zero. Baccarat.
3
KING. THREE. 3 POINTS.
The banker slowly turned his own two cards face up.
He still had a chance.
Now he was really faced with the moment of truth.

It was a nine, a wonderful nine of hearts, the card known in gipsy magic as 'a whisper of love, a whisper of hate.'

But it meant nothing. Bond might have had a one, in which case he now had ten points, or nothing.

Holding a three and giving nine is one of the moot situations at the game. The odds are so nearly divided between to draw or not to draw. Bond let the banker sweat it out.

He faced it. The table craned.

It was a five. Le Chiffre had eight points.

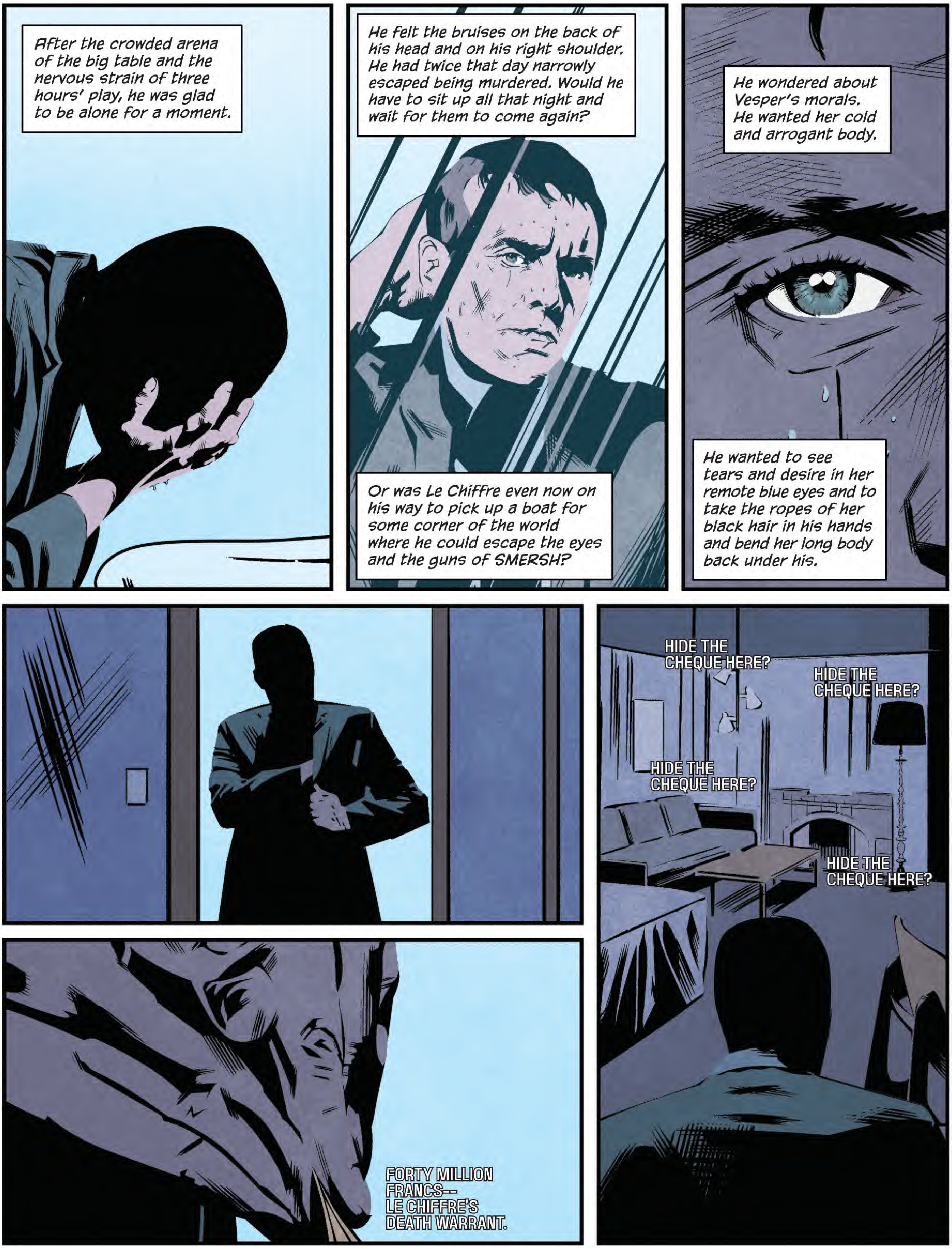
Le Chiffre thought he must have won. The croupier reached almost apologetically across the table. There was not a man there who did not believe Bond was defeated.
Huit à la banque.
TWO QUEENS. ZERO POINTS. PLUS NINE OF HEARTS. 9 POINTS TOTAL.
Et le neuf!
POSITION: VICTORIOUS.
Oh, my!
The big man fell back in his chair as if slugged above the heart.

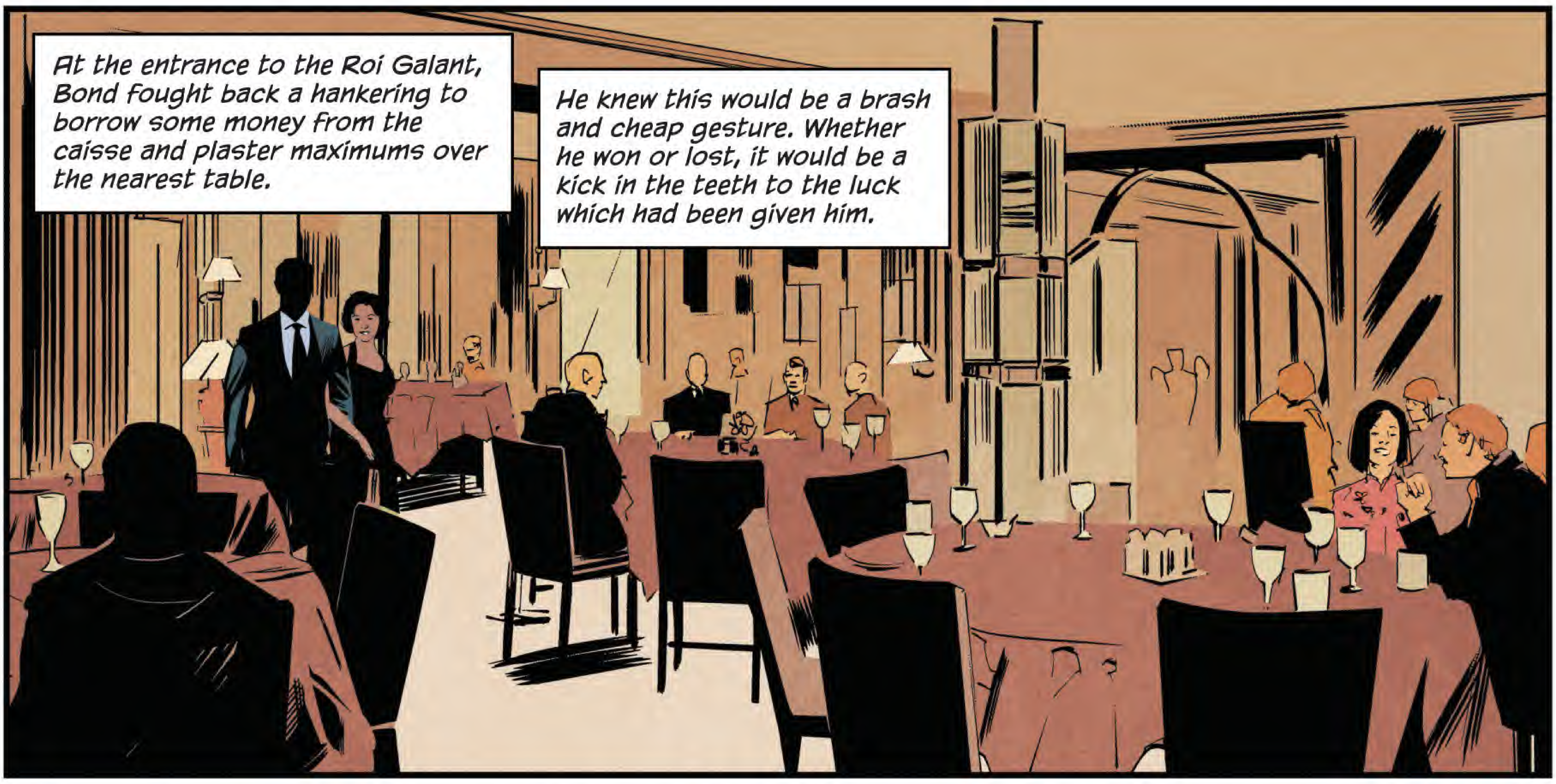
Un banco de dix millions.
This is the kill, thought Bond. This is his last capital. He has come to where I stood an hour ago.
CIGARETTE No. 79 TODAY.
Banco.
But if he loses, there is no one to come to his aid, no miracle to help him.
5
4
FIVE. FOUR. 9 POINTS TOTAL. POSITION: IMPERVIOUS.
Once more the two cards were borne over to him. Bond flipped them face up into the middle of the table.
ALEXANDRE
R
DAVID
R
Et le baccarat.
The spectators looked at Le Chiffre curiously and rather fearfully, as if he carried the smell of death on him.
Then he vanished from Bond's sight.

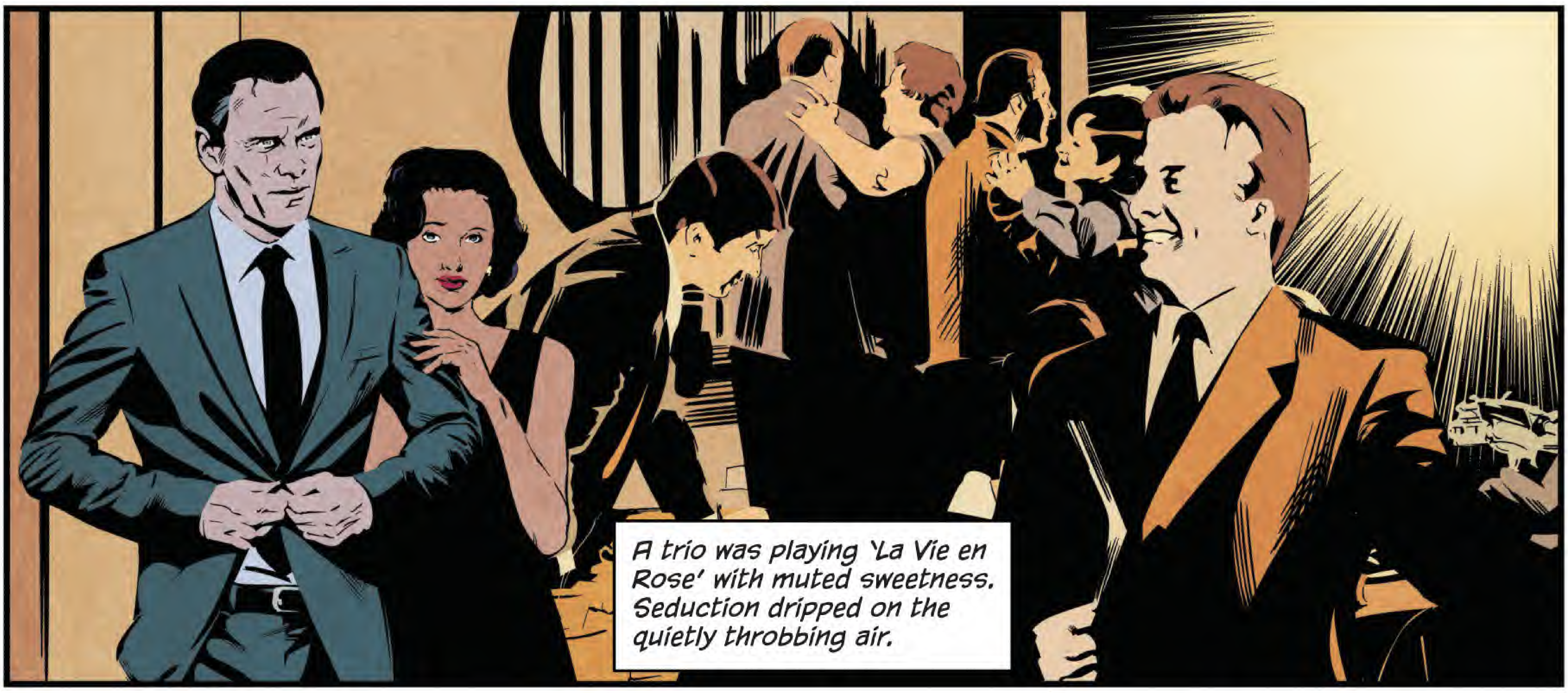
The Casino directors invited Bond to the private office, where he took Leiter's money in notes and a cheque to cash on the Crédit Lyonnais for the remaining forty-odd million.
That envelope was the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to me. I thought I was really finished.
I gave the gun to Mathis.
He was as puzzled as we were by the spill you took. The man had a certificate for a war-wound pension, so they gave him permission to bring the stick with him.
These people certainly get themselves well organized.
.45 ROUND. TAKEN FROM GUN HIDDEN IN WALKING STICK.
I'll just go over to the hotel and put this away. I don't like wandering around with Le Chiffre's death-warrant on me. He might get ideas.
Then I'd like to celebrate a bit. What do you think?
Shall we have a glass of champagne in the nightclub before we go to bed?
I think I'd love to...I'll tidy up while you put your winnings away. I'll meet you in the entrance hall.
I'd rather take a little rest before BREAKFAST. It's been QUITE a day and I expect Paris will want me to do a bit of MOPPING-UP tomorrow.
You get your sleep, Leiter. Thanks for all you've done. I hope we get on a job again one day.
Suits me, so long as you can draw a NINE when it's needed--and bring VESPER along with you.

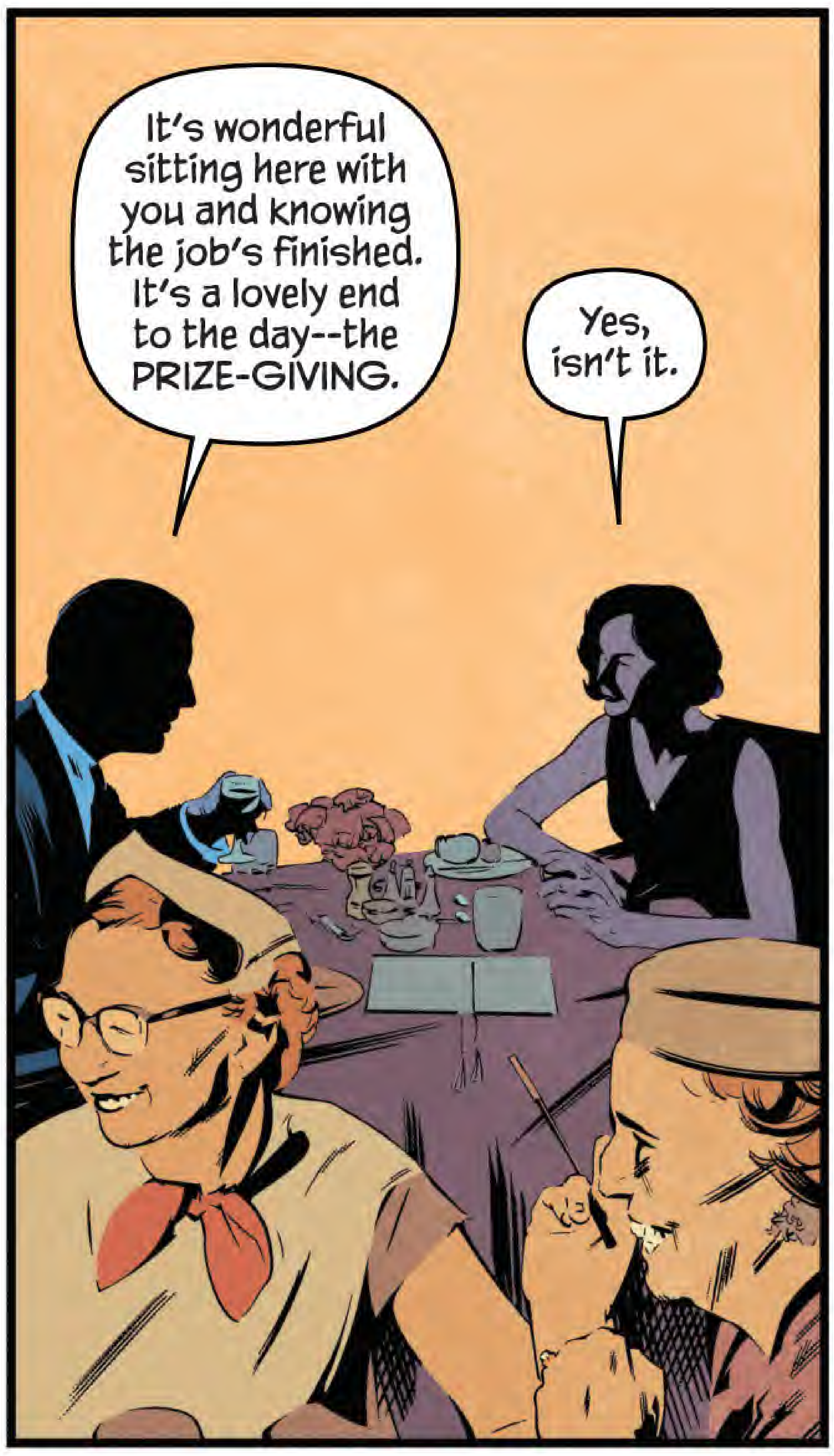
CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

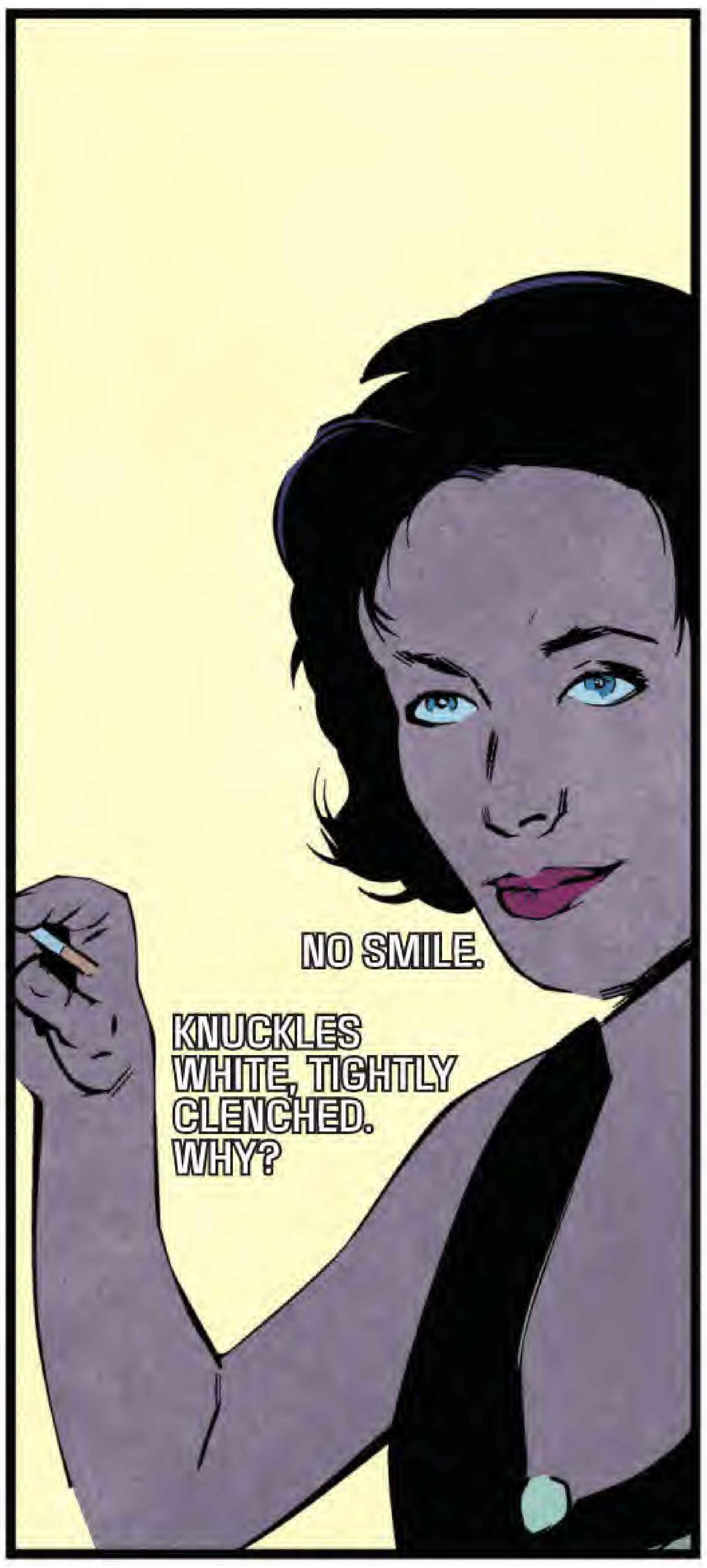
‘LA VIE EN ROSE?’

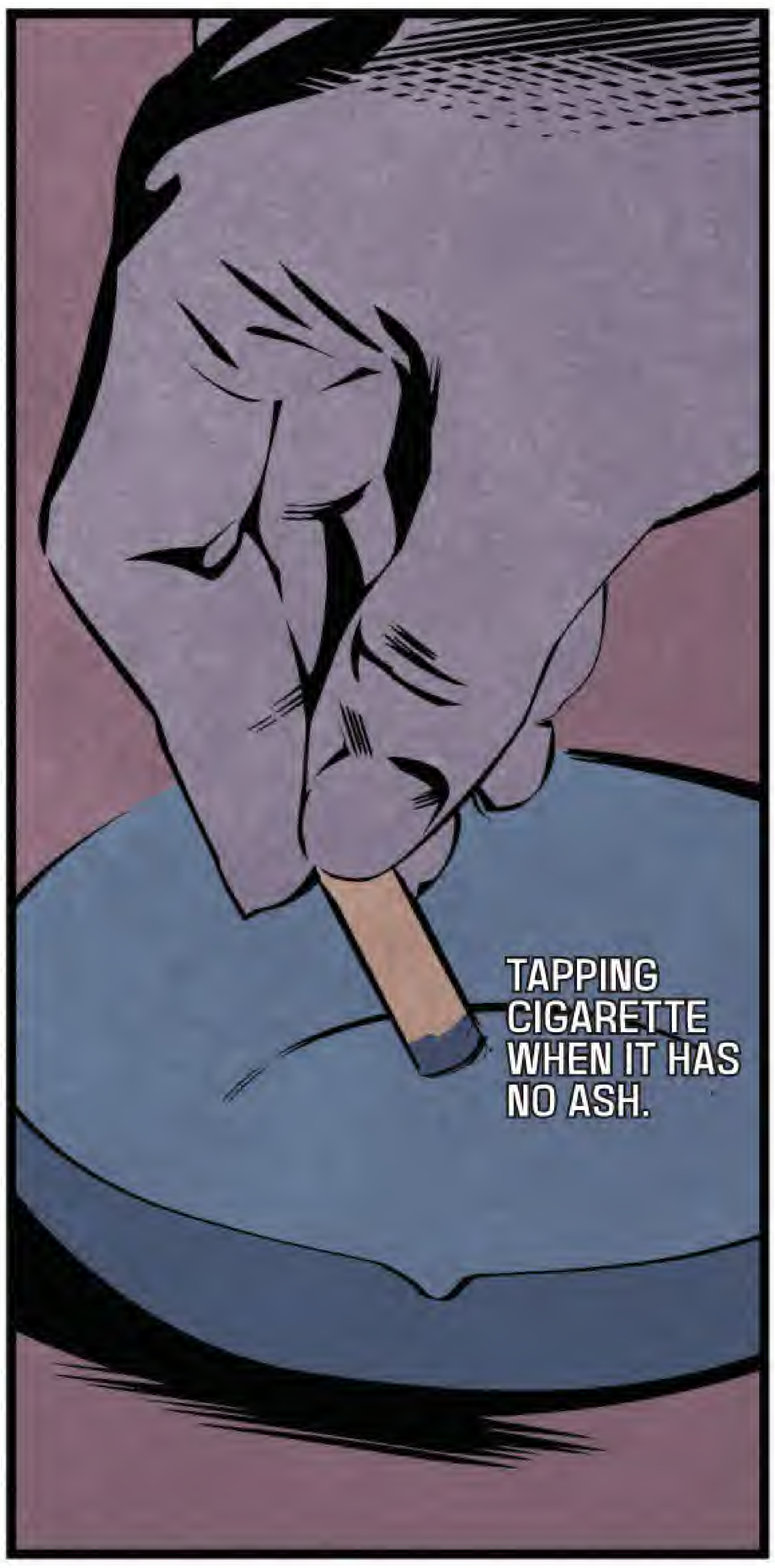

After the crowded arena of the big table and the nervous strain of three hours' play, he was glad to be alone for a moment.
He felt the bruises on the back of his head and on his right shoulder. He had twice that day narrowly escaped being murdered. Would he have to sit up all that night and wait for them to come again?
Or was Le Chiffre even now on his way to pick up a boat for some corner of the world where he could escape the eyes and the guns of SMERSH?
He wondered about Vesper's morals. He wanted her cold and arrogant body.
He wanted to see tears and desire in her remote blue eyes and to take the ropes of her black hair in his hands and bend her long body back under his.
HIDE THE CHEQUE HERE?
HIDE THE CHEQUE HERE?
HIDE THE CHEQUE HERE?
HIDE THE CHEQUE HERE?
FORTY MILLION FRANCS-- LE CHIFFRE'S DEATH WARRANT.


At the entrance to the Roi Galant, Bond fought back a hankering to borrow some money from the caisse and plaster maximums over the nearest table.
He knew this would be a brash and cheap gesture. Whether he won or lost, it would be a kick in the teeth to the luck which had been given him.


A trio was playing 'La Vie en Rose' with muted sweetness. Seduction dripped on the quietly throbbing air.


It's wonderful sitting here with you and knowing the job's finished. It's a lovely end to the day--the PRIZE-GIVING.
Yes, isn't it.


NO SMILE.
KNUCKLES WHITE, TIGHTLY CLENCHED. WHY?


TAPPING CIGARETTE WHEN IT HAS NO ASH.

Bond felt intensely aware of her because he wanted to draw her into his own feeling of warmth and relaxed sensuality. But he accepted her reserve.
He thought it came from a desire to protect herself from him, or else it was her reaction to his coolness to her earlier in the evening, which he knew had been taken as a rebuff.
When Bond and Leiter had left to walk to the hotel, she said she had telephoned Paris and told M's representative of the result of the game. M had asked for the information to be passed on to him at any time of the day or night.
This was all she said. She didn't smile. Bond felt frustrated. At four o'clock, Bond was about to call for the bill when...
A note, for you.
Oh, it's only MATHIS. He says would I come to the entrance hall. He's got a message for you. Perhaps he's not in evening clothes or something.
I won't be a minute. Then perhaps we could go home.
I'm afraid I don't feel very good company this evening. It's been a rather nerve-racking day. I'm so sorry.
I'll get the bill.

He felt flat. He suddenly realized he was tired.
CIGARETTE NO. 89 TODAY.
The last mouthful of champagne tasted bitter, as the first glass too many always does.
He would have liked to have seen Mathis's cheerful face and heard his news...perhaps even a word of congratulations.
Suddenly the note to Vesper seemed odd to him. It was not the way Mathis would do things-- he would have asked them both to join him at the bar of the Casino.
He had much to tell Bond, more than Bond had to tell him. The arrest of the Bulgarian, who had probably talked some more; the chase after the man with the stick; Le Chiffre's movements when he left the Casino.
Or he would have joined them in the nightclub, whatever his clothes.

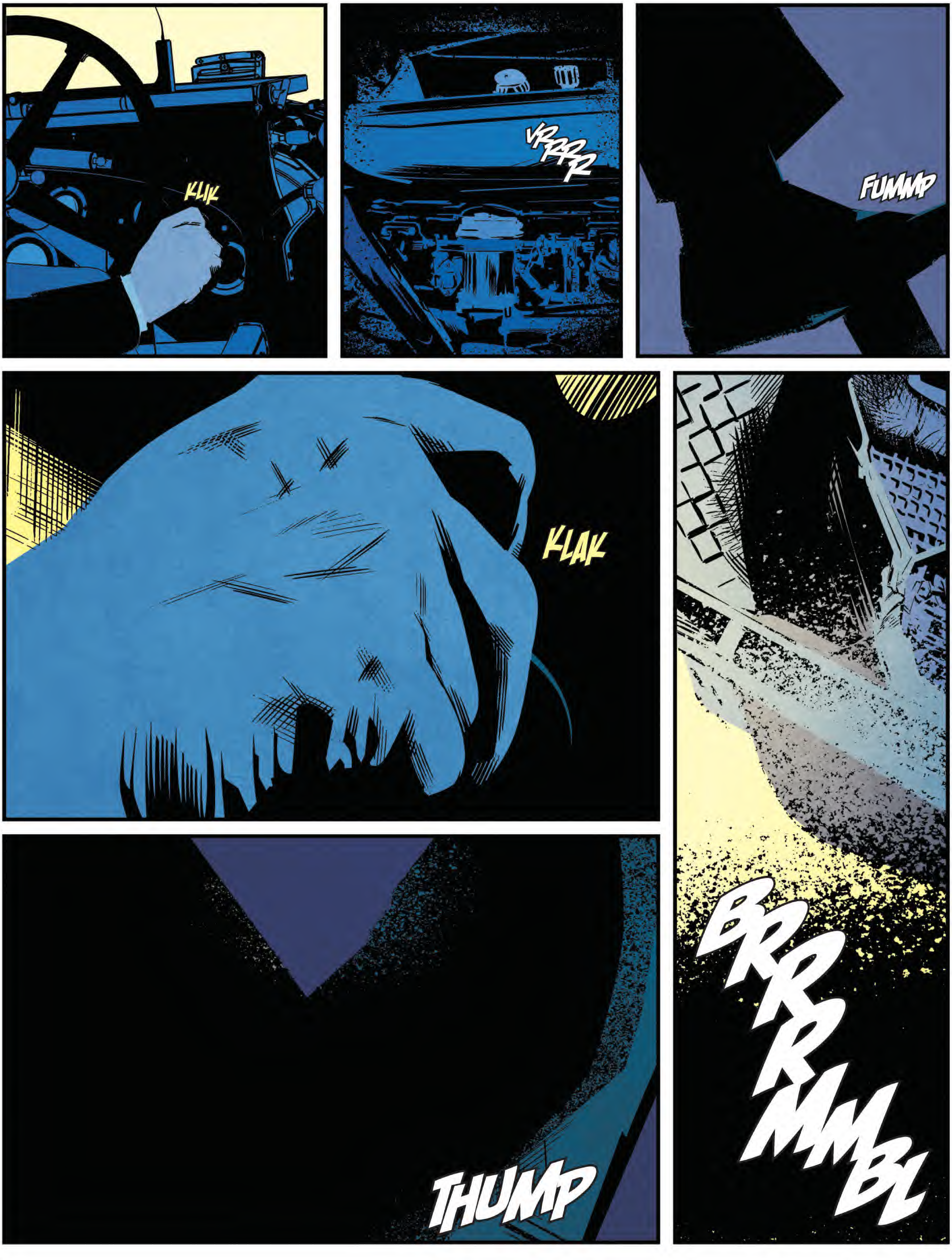
No Vesper.
No Mathis.
HALL D'ENTRÉE
Hell.
A taxi, monsieur?
AAAIIEE!
SLAM
VRRRMM

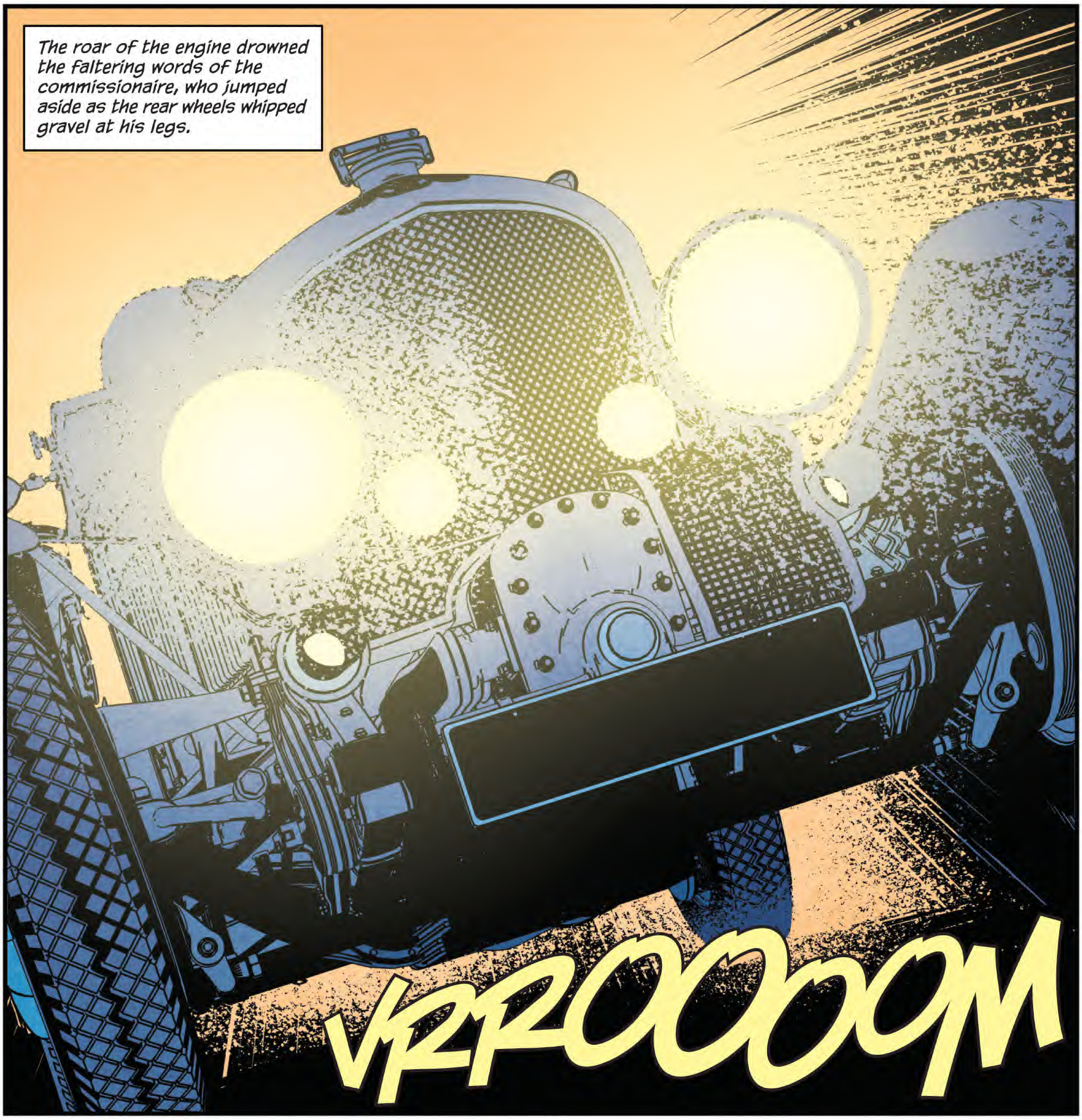
With a harsh growl and stutter from the exhaust a beetle-browed Citroën shot out of the shadows into the light of the moon.
SKREEECH

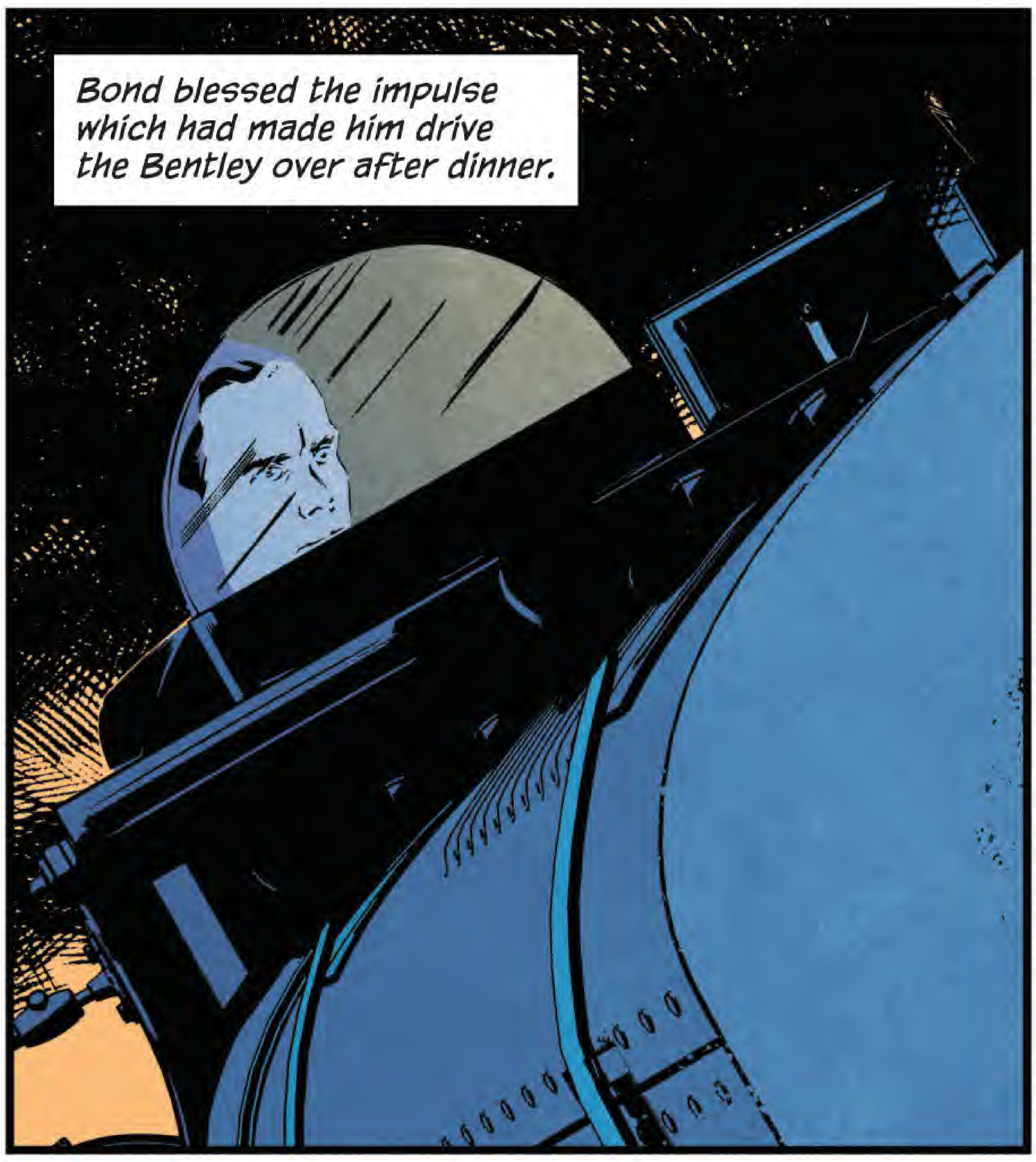
Its tail rocked on its soft springs as if a violent struggle was taking place on the back seat. With a snarl it raced out to the wide entrance gate in a spray of gravel.
A small black object shot out of an open rear window and thudded into a flower-bed.
FOCUS. LISTEN. WHAT DO YOU HEAR?
SCREAM OF TORTURED RUBBER. THE TYRES CAUGHT THE BOULEVARD. A HARSH LEFT-HANDED TURN.
THE CITROËN'S EXHAUST IN SECOND GEAR. CRASH INTO TOP.
Bond knew he would find Vesper's evening bag among the flowers.
He scrabbled through its contents. The crumpled note was there amongst the usual feminine baggage.
Can you come out to
the entrance hall fo
a moment? I hav
news for you
companion
THE CRUDEST POSSIBLE FORGERY.

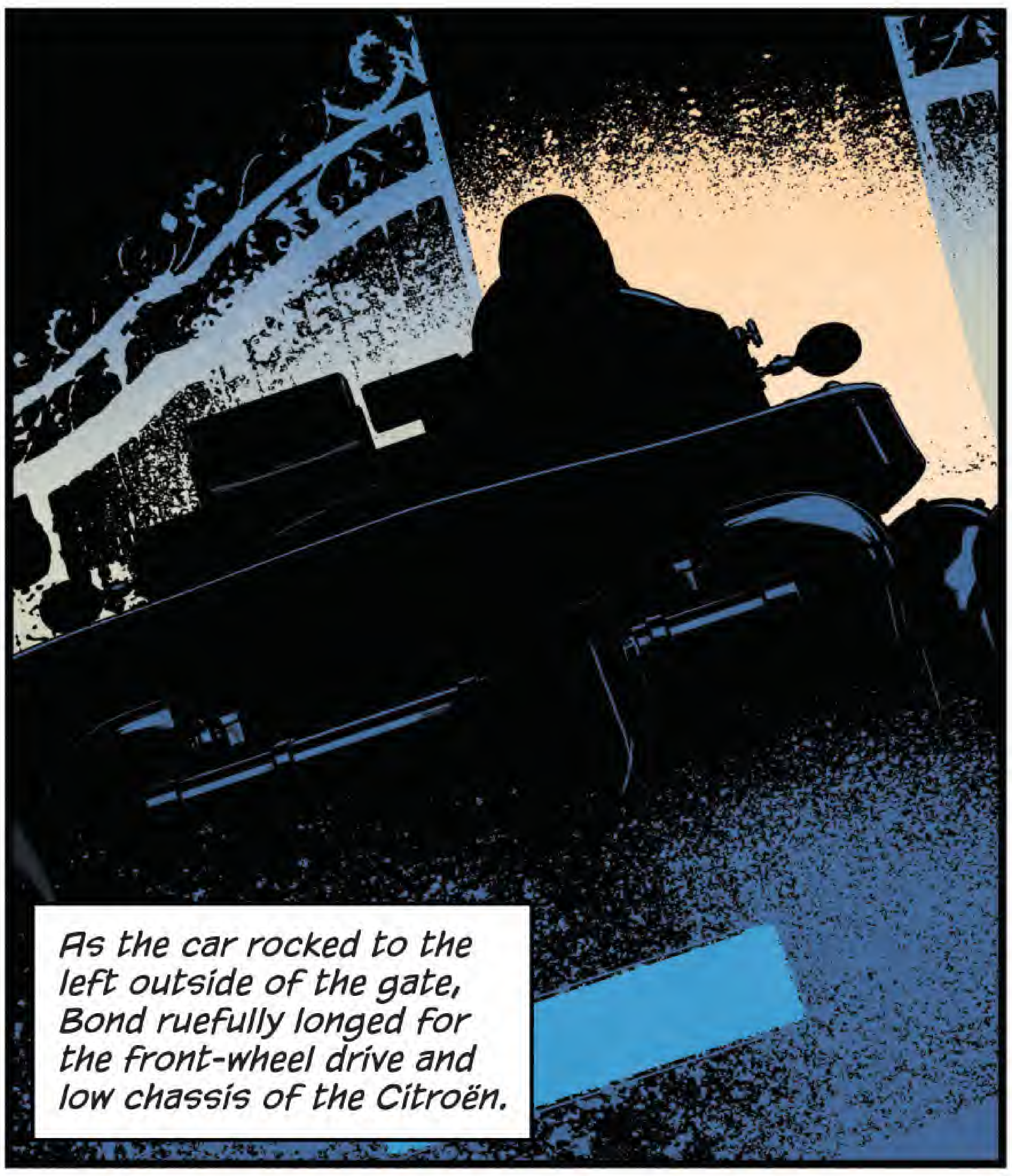
CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

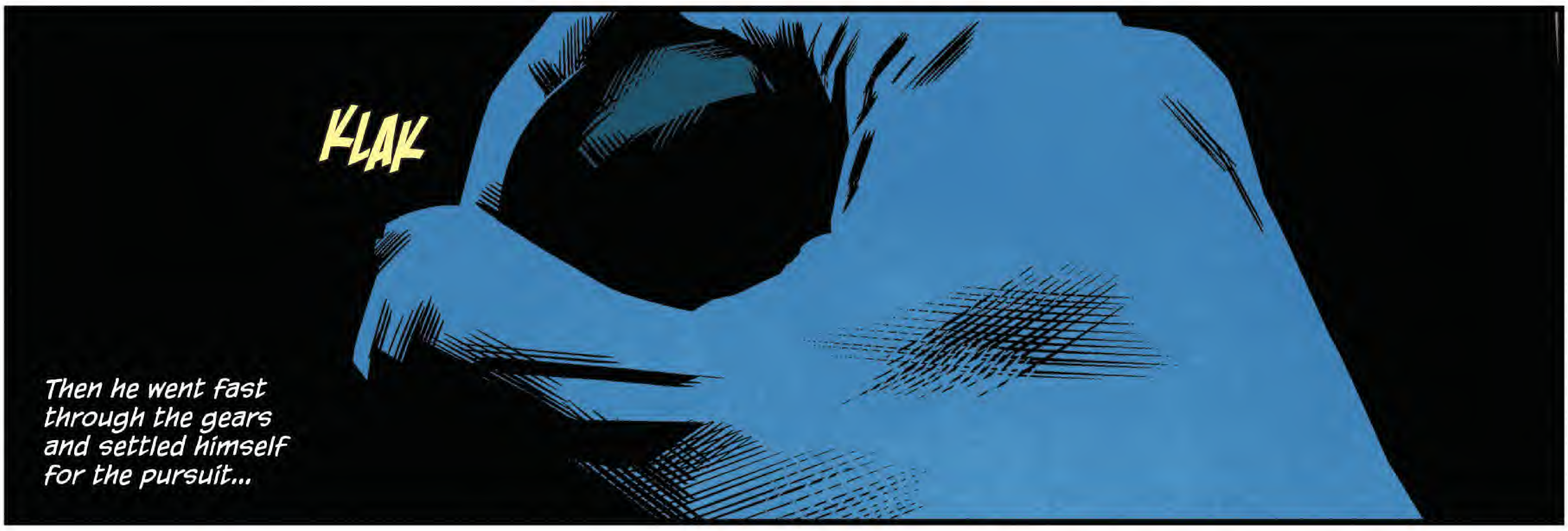
BLACK HARE AND GREY HOUND

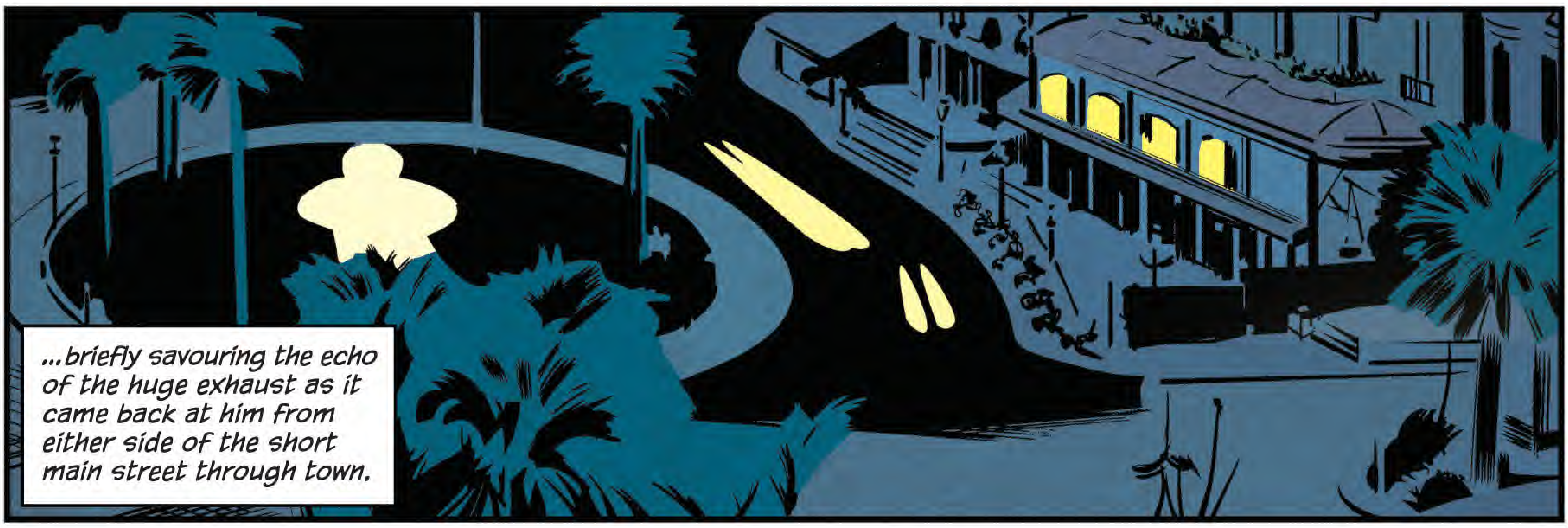

KLIK
VRRRR
FUMMP
KLAK
THUMP
BRRRMMBL

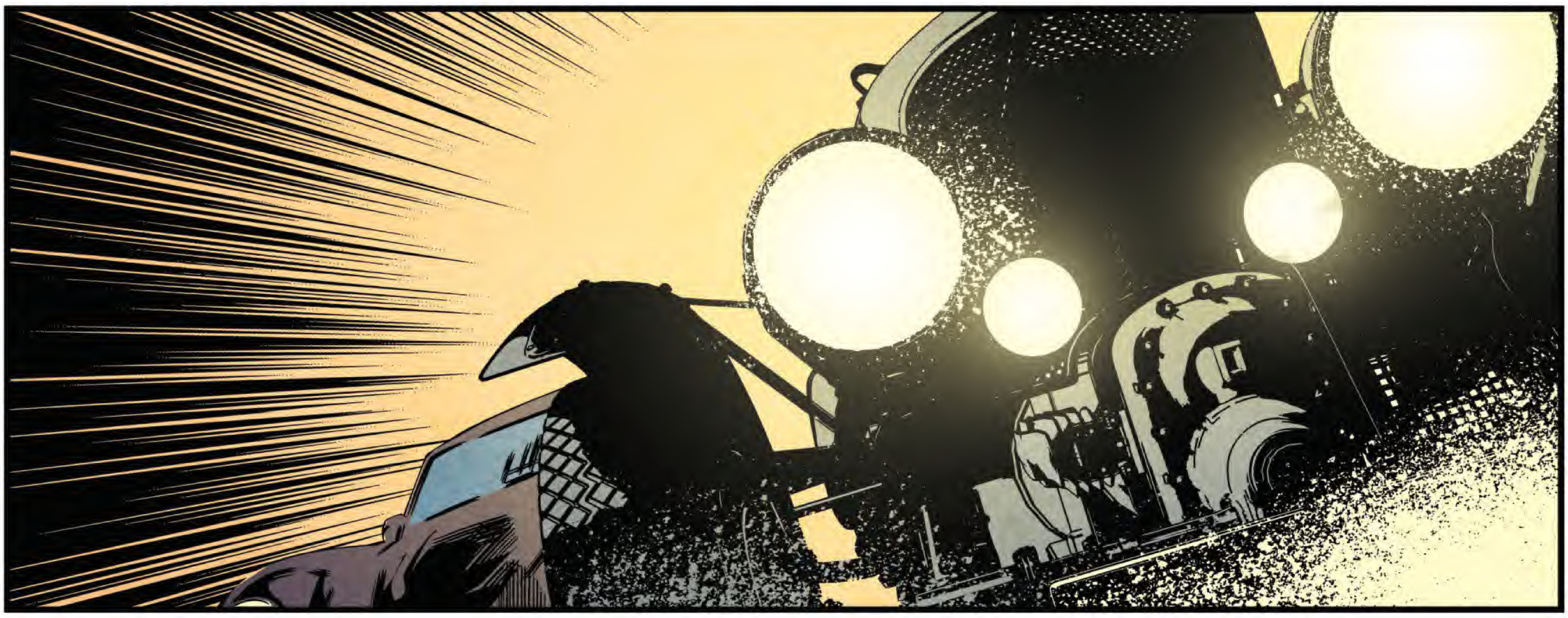

The roar of the engine drowned the faltering words of the commissionaire, who jumped aside as the rear wheels whipped gravel at his legs.
VRROOOOM

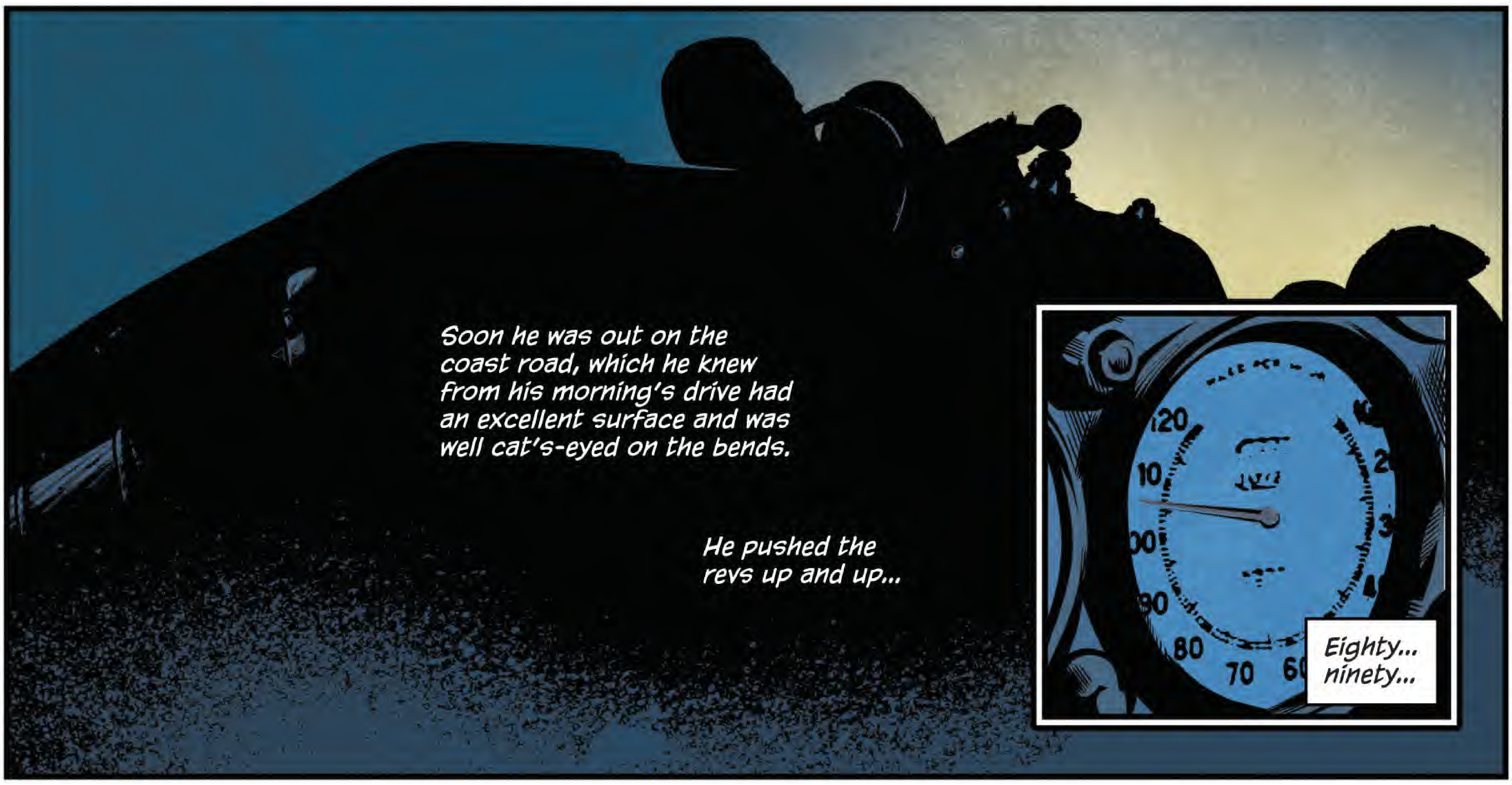

Bond blessed the impulse which had made him drive the Bentley over after dinner.


As the car rocked to the left outside of the gate, Bond ruefully longed for the front-wheel drive and low chassis of the Citroën.


KLAK
Then he went fast through the gears and settled himself for the pursuit...


...briefly savouring the echo of the huge exhaust as it came back at him from either side of the short main street through town.




Soon he was out on the coast road, which he knew from his morning's drive had an excellent surface and was well cat's-eyed on the bends.
He pushed the revs up and up...
Eighty... ninety...

His huge Marchal headlights bore a safe white tunnel, nearly half a mile long, between the walls of the night.
He knew the Citroën must have come this way. He had heard the exhaust penetrate beyond the town, but a little dust still clung on the bends.
With the other half of his mind he cursed Vesper, and M for having sent her on the job.
This was just what he had been afraid of.
The silly bitch.

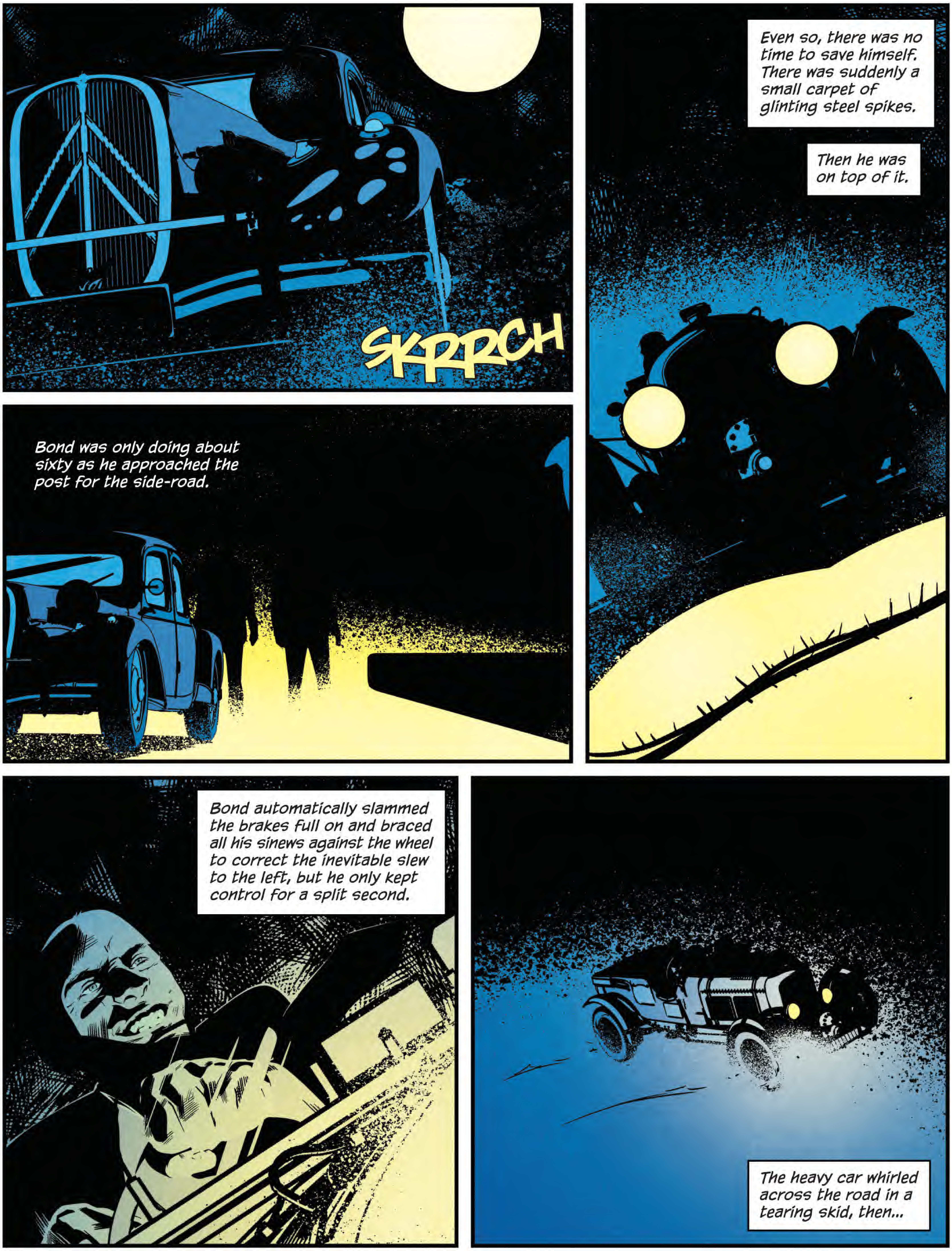
A straight swop--the girl against his cheque for forty million. Well, he wouldn't play.
He would try and catch the Citroën and shoot it out with them, and if she got shot in the process, that was too bad.
HOOONK
If he didn't catch up with them he would get back to his hotel and go to sleep and say no more about it.
The girl would just have to take it.

On straight stretches the Amherst Villiers supercharger dug spurs into the Bentley's twenty-five horses and the engine sent a high-pitched scream of pain into the night.
The revolutions mounted. One hundred ten...twenty...
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
Loaded as she was, the Citroën could hardly better eighty even on this road.
On an impulse, he slowed down to seventy, turned on his foglights.
Sure enough, the glow of another car a mile or two down the coast.
COLT ARMY SPECIAL .45, KEPT IN A CONCEALED HOLSTER.
With the gun, if he was lucky he could hope to get their tyres or their petrol tank at anything up to a hundred yards.
He laid the gun on the seat beside him and switched on the big lights again, and screamed off in pursuit. He felt calm...

...the problem of Vesper's life was a problem no longer.
Hn.

Attention...
...allez.
KRANNK
KCHAK
SKREEEE

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:
THE CRAWLING OF THE SKIN


SKRRCH
Bond was only doing about sixty as he approached the post for the side-road.
Even so, there was no time to save himself. There was suddenly a small carpet of glinting steel spikes.
Then he was on top of it.
Bond automatically slammed the brakes full on and braced all his sinews against the wheel to correct the inevitable slew to the left, but he only kept control for a split second.
The heavy car whirled across the road in a tearing skid, then...

The Bentley's great headlights searched the sky.
For a split second, it seemed to paw at the heavens like a giant praying-mantis.

Then it slowly toppled backwards and fell with a splintering crash of coachwork and glass.
KRRAASH
VRRRR

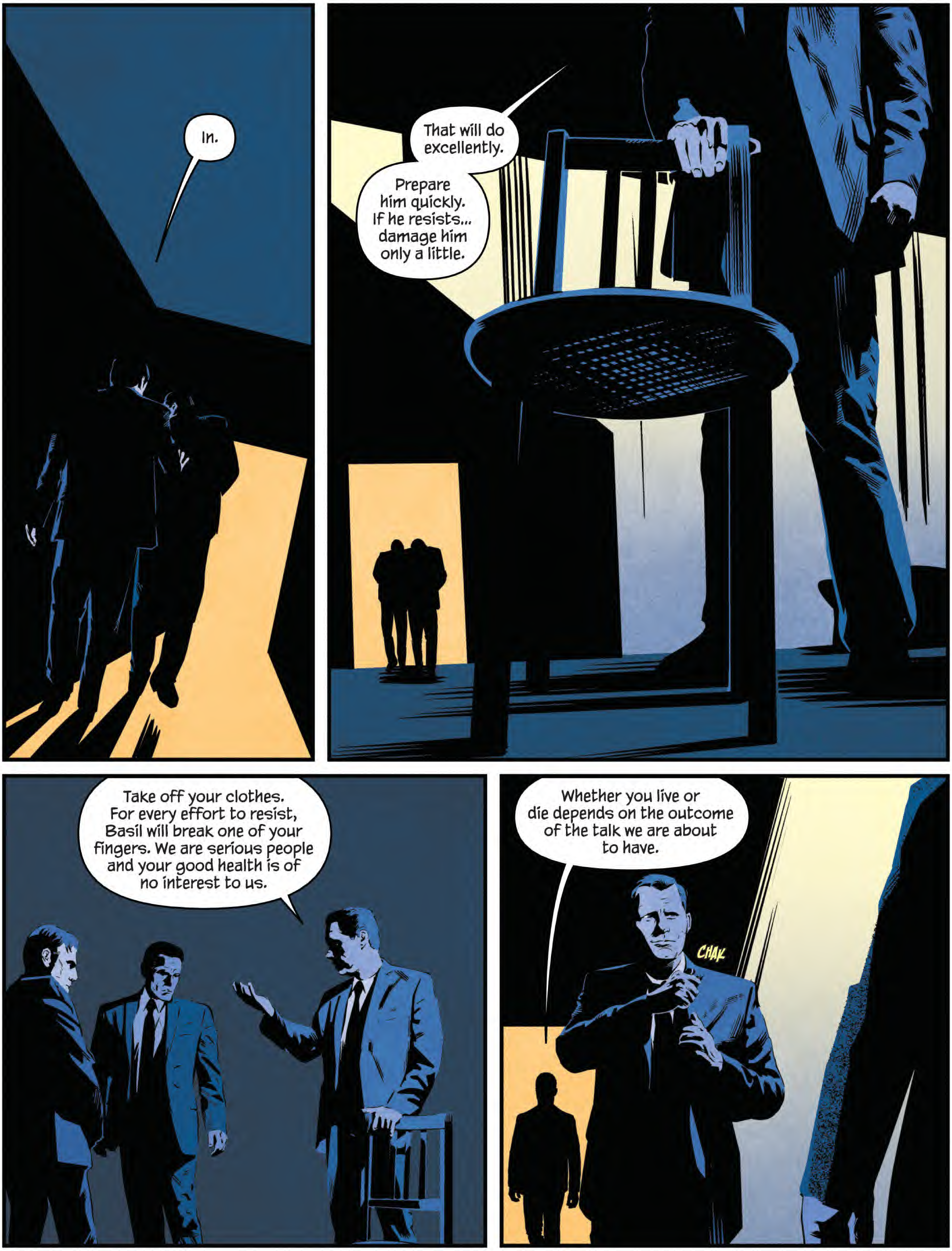
Put your guns away and get him out. I'll keep you covered.
Be careful of him--I don't want a corpse.
And hurry up. It's getting light.
SNAP
-unghh-
That's enough. Tie his arms and put him in the car.
Empty his pockets first and give me his gun.

It was the sharp bite of wire flex into his wrists that brought Bond to himself. He was aching all over, but he found that no bones were broken.
He had had to take too much in the past twenty-four hours and now this last stroke by the enemy seemed almost too final. This time there could be no miracles.
And Vesper...
Damn fool girl getting herself trussed up like a chicken, having her skirt pulled over her head as if the whole of this business was some kind of dormitory rag.
But then he felt sorry for her. Her naked legs looked so childlike and defenseless.
Vesper.
There was no answer from the bundle in the corner and Bond suddenly had a chill feeling, but then she stirred slightly.
-nnggh-
Silence.

He reflected on the efficiency of these people and the ingenuity of the equipment they used. He stifled a desire to place the blame on London. He should have known.
He squirmed as he thought of himself washing down champagne in the Roi Galant while the enemy was busy preparing his counter-stroke.
Now that he realized that Vesper had only been a sprat to catch a mackerel the whole picture became clear.
It was an extremely unpleasant picture.
From his reconnaissance of the day before, Bond knew there was only an occasional farm for several miles.
Le Chiffre could have them both to himself, undisturbed, for several hours. For the first time since his capture, fear came to Bond and crawled up his spine.
Bond suddenly decided.

AAGH!
With only his feet as weapons, there was no plan in his mind except to do as much damage as possible and be able to exchange a few hurried words with the girl.
MOST SENSITIVE TARGET. KICK HERE.
He just wanted to tell her not to give in.
GRAUGH--!
Come, my dear friend. We are wasting our time.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:
"MY DEAR BOY"


In.
That will do excellently.
Prepare him quickly. If he resists... damage him only a little.
Take off your clothes. For every effort to resist, Basil will break one of your fingers. We are serious people and your good health is of no interest to us.
Whether you live or die depends on the outcome of the talk we are about to have.
CHAK

SHUNK
ANALYZE: HOW LONG CAN BE WASTED BY RESISTING? ESTIMATE: ONLY AN INSTANT.
Vite.
ATTACK: POLICEMAN'S HOLD.

COUNTER MEASURE: DROP TO ONE KNEE AND--
No.
SHK
Allez.
Hell.

Sit down there.

NO MISTAKES WITH THE KNOTS.
NO PLAY LEFT IN ANY OF THE BINDINGS.
THE FLEX BITES SHARPLY INTO THE FLESH.
Bond was utterly a prisoner, naked and defenceless.
His buttocks and the underpart of his body protruded through the seat of the chair towards the floor.
Then Le Chiffre's wrist sprang suddenly upwards.

The result was startling.
-hnn-

Uuhhnn...
You SEE, dear boy? Is the position quite CLEAR now?
Now let us get down to BUSINESS and see how soon we can be finished with this UNFORTUNATE mess you have got yourself into.
My dear boy, the game of RED INDIANS is over, quite over. You have STUMBLED by mischance into a game for GROWN-UPS. You are not equipped, my dear boy, to play games with adults.
It was very foolish of your NANNY in London to have sent you out here with your SPADE and BUCKET.
Where is the money?
KRRAK

~hunh~ ~hunh~
I intend to continue attacking the SENSITIVE PARTS of your body until you answer my question. I am without mercy...and there will be NO relenting.
This is not a romantic ADVENTURE story in which the villain is FINALLY routed and the HERO is given a medal and marries the girl. These things don't happen in REAL life.
If you continue to be OBSTINATE, you will be tortured to the edge of MADNESS and then the GIRL will be brought in and we will SET ABOUT HER in front of you.
If that is still not enough, you will both be PAINFULLY killed and I shall leave your BODIES and make my way abroad to a COMFORTABLE house which is awaiting me.
There I shall take up a useful and profitable career and live to a RIPE and PEACEFUL old age in the bosom of the family I shall DOUBTLESS create.
So you see, my dear boy, I stand to lose NOTHING. If you hand the MONEY over, so much the better. If not, I shall SHRUG my shoulders and be on my way.
But you, my dear fellow, can only hope that I shall spare you further pain...and spare your life. There is no other hope for you but that. Absolutely none.
WELL?
Bond waited for the pain. He knew that the beginning of torture is the worst.

There is a parabola of agony. A crescendo leading up to a peak and then the nerves are blunted and react progressively less until unconsciousness and death.
All he could do was to pray for the peak, pray that his spirit would hold out so long and then accept the long free-wheel down to the final black-out.
Colleagues who had survived torture by the Germans and Japanese told him that towards the end there came a wonderful period of warmth and languor leading into a sort of sexual twilight...
...where pain turned to pleasure and where hatred and fear of the torturers turned to a masochistic infatuation.
It was the supreme test of will to avoid showing this form of punch-drunkenness.
They would either kill you at once and save further useless effort, or let you recover so that your nerves had crept back to the other side of the parabola.
GRAAAGH!
Then they would start again.

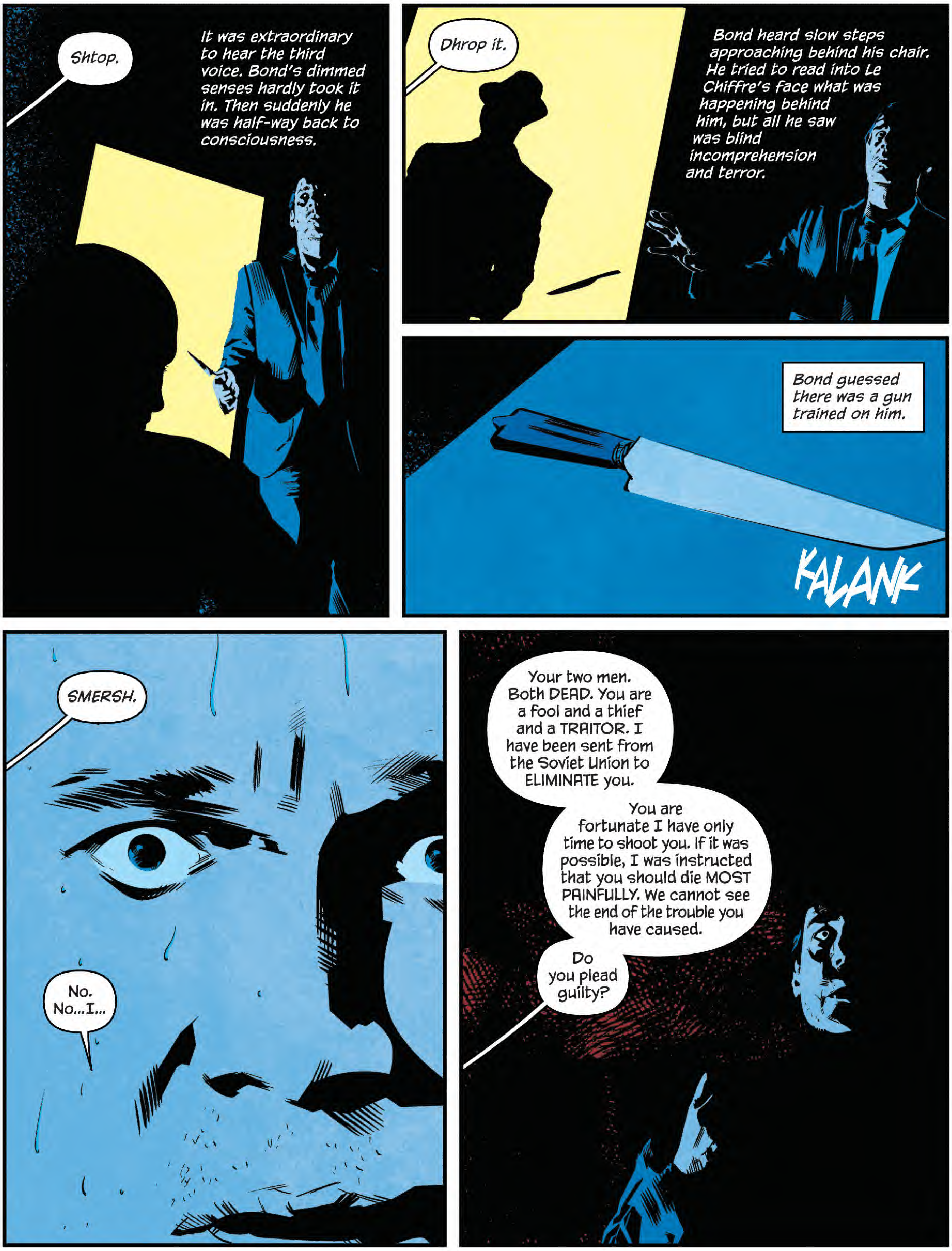
We KNOW that the money is somewhere in your room, which was SEARCHED by four of my people.
We found a good deal in CHILDISH hiding-places. The ball-cock in the lavatory yielded an interesting little CODEBOOK and we found some of your PAPERS taped to the back of a drawer.
EVERY INCH has been searched. It is most unfortunate for you that we didn't find the CHEQUE.
Torture is a TERRIBLE thing. But it is a SIMPLE matter, particularly when the patient is a MAN.
With a man it is quite unnecessary to indulge in REFINEMENTS. With this simple INSTRUMENT, one can cause a man as much pain as is POSSIBLE or necessary. There is NOTHING worse.
It is not only the immediate AGONY, but also the thought that your manhood is being GRADUALLY DESTROYED and that, in the end, if you will not yield, you will no longer be a man.
...drink...
Of course, my dear boy, how thoughtless of me.
We must certainly keep your tongue lubricated.

He was a little, but only a little, exaggerating the extent of his physical collapse. Anything to gain time and anything to defer the next searing pain.
Money... no good... to you...
...Police trace it to you.
Ah, I had FORGOTTEN to tell you. We met after our little game at the Casino and you were such a SPORTSMAN you agreed we would have ONE MORE RUN.
Unfortunately you LOST and this upset you SO MUCH that you decided to leave Royale immediately. You very kindly gave me a NOTE explaining the circumstances so I would have NO DIFFICULTY cashing your cheque.
Now shall we continue? I have ALL the time in the world.
Truth to tell I am rather INTERESTED to see how long a man can stand this particular form of... er...ENCOURAGEMENT.
So that was the score, thought Bond, with a final sinking of the heart. Well, if he had to die anyway, he might as well try it the hard way.
He had no hope that Mathis or Leiter would get to him in time, but at least there was a chance that they would catch up with Le Chiffre before he could get away.
NO. You--

Le Chiffre set to work again with savage fury.
Occasionally he snarled like a wild beast.
After ten minutes Bond had fainted, blessedly.
Le Chiffre at once stopped. He seemed to make up his mind. There was no colour in Bond's face.
There was a faint flutter of his skin above the heart. Otherwise he might have been dead.
That is ALL, Bond. We will now finish with you. You understand? Not KILL you, but FINISH with you.
And then we will have in the girl and see if something can be got out of the REMAINS of the two of you.
Say good-bye to IT, Bond.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

A CRAG-LIKE FACE

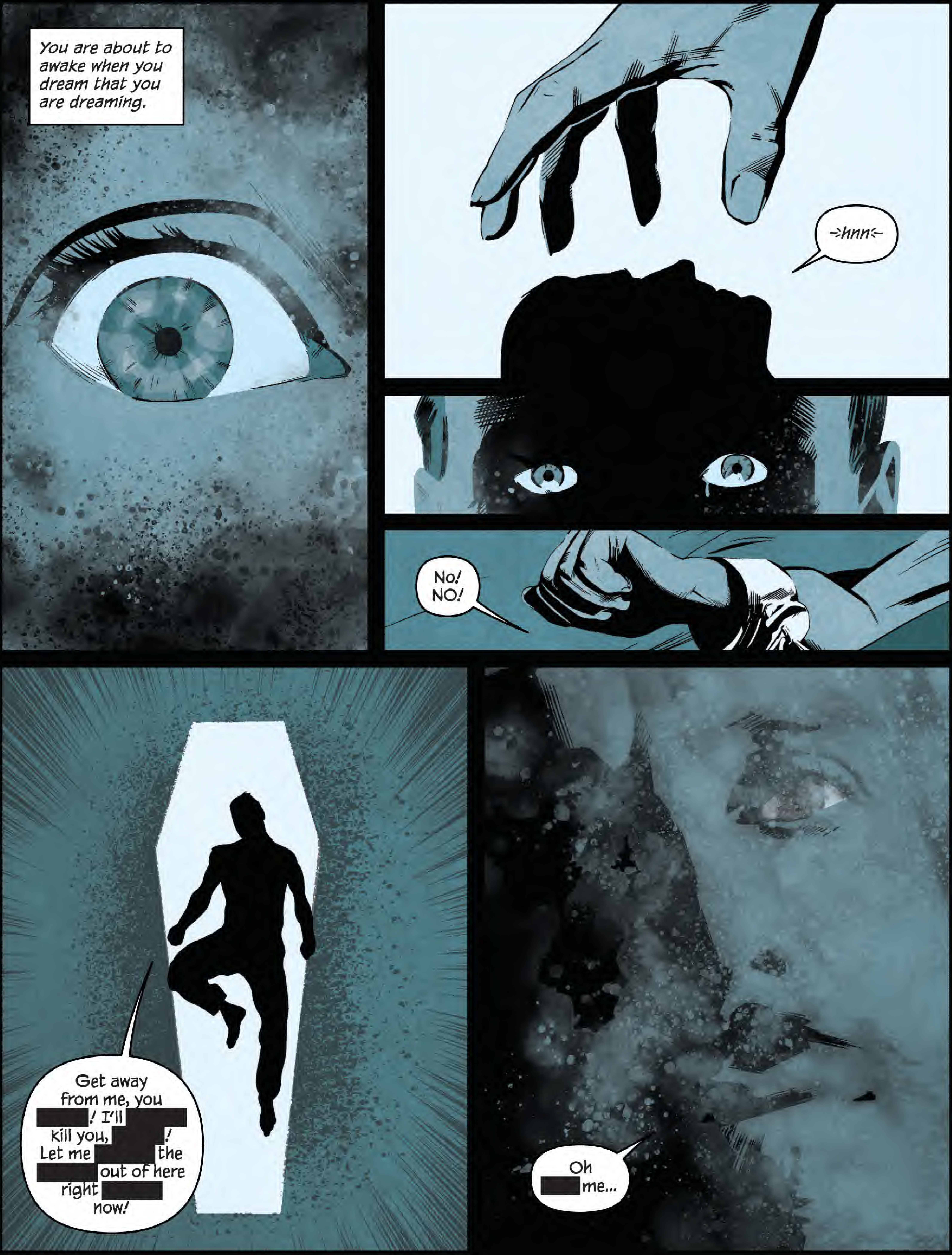

Shtop.
It was extraordinary to hear the third voice. Bond's dimmed senses hardly took it in. Then suddenly he was half-way back to consciousness.
Dhrop it.
Bond heard slow steps approaching behind his chair. He tried to read into Le Chiffre's face what was happening behind him, but all he saw was blind incomprehension and terror.
Bond guessed there was a gun trained on him.
KALANK
SMERSH.
No. No...I...
Your two men. Both DEAD. You are a fool and a thief and a TRAITOR. I have been sent from the Soviet Union to ELIMINATE you.
You are fortunate I have only time to shoot you. If it was possible, I was instructed that you should die MOST PAINFULLY. We cannot see the end of the trouble you have caused.
Do you plead guilty?

Yes.
PHUT
You are fortunate. I have no orders to kill you. Your life has been saved twice in one day.

But you can tell your organization that SMERSH is only merciful by chance or by mistake. I should have had orders to kill any foreign spies who were hanging round this traitor like flies round a dog's mess.
But I shall leave you my visiting card.
You are a gambler. You play at cards. One day perhaps you will play against one of us.
It would be well that you should be known as a spy.
The pain was nothing to what Bond was already suffering, but it was enough to plunge him again into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER NINETEEN:

THE WHITE TENT


You are about to awake when you dream that you are dreaming.
~hnn~
No! NO!
Get away from me, you [redacted]! I'll [redacted] kill you, [redacted]! Let me [redacted] the [redacted] out of here right [redacted] now!
Oh [redacted] me...

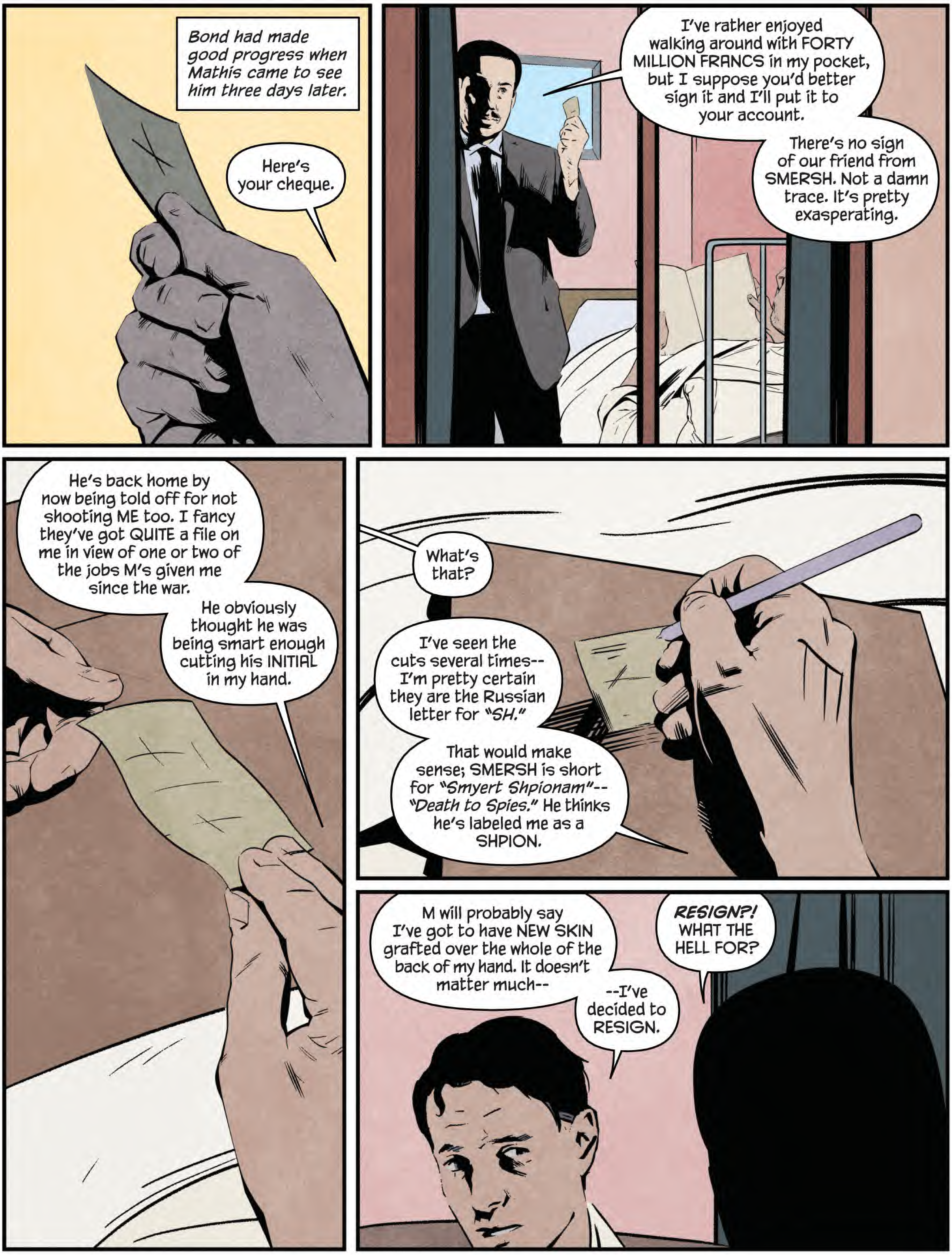
mmmmm...
There there.
A woman's voice was speaking and the words gradually penetrated to him. It slowly came to him that he was being comforted...
Well, I'm certainly glad you've woken up at last. I've never heard such dreadful language in my life.
...and that this was a friend and not an enemy. He had been so certain that he was still a captive and that the torture was about to begin again.
Where am I?
A nursing home at Royale. I've been sent over from England to look after you.
Now just lie quiet and I'll go tell the doctor you're awake.
Bond closed his eyes and mentally explored his body.
STUBBLE, TWO DAYS' GROWTH.
ACHES; BRUISING FROM CAR CRASH.
KNIFE WOUND FROM SMERSH AGENT.
BRUISING, CUTS FROM BINDING.
NUMB. LOCAL ANAESTHETIC?

You have a lot of questions to ask, my dear Mister Bond. And I can tell you MOST of the answers. Then you may have a few minutes with MONSIEUR MATHIS.
You have been here about two days. Your car was found by a farmer on the way to market in Royale, and he informed the police.
The doctor had been detached from his duties with the Deuxième Bureau to look after Bond's case.
After some delay Monsieur Mathis heard that it was your car and he immediately went to Les Noctambules with his men.
You and Le Chiffre were found and also your friend, Miss Lynd, who was unharmed and suffered no molestation. She was prostrated with shock, but is now fully recovered.
Le Chiffre's two gunmen are dead, each killed by a single .35 bullet in the back of the skull.
Le Chiffre is dead, shot with a similar weapon between the eyes. Did you witness his death?
Yes.
Your own injuries are SERIOUS, but your life is not in danger though you have lost a LOT of blood. If all goes well, you will recover COMPLETELY...
...and NONE of the functions of your body will be impaired.
But I fear that you will continue to be in PAIN for several days. Above all, it is important that you rest and regain your strength. You are suffering from GRAVE mental and physical shock.

For how long were you... MALTREATED?
About an hour.
Then it is remarkable that you are alive and I CONGRATULATE you. Few men could have SUPPORTED what you have done.
You may have ten minutes, then you will be forcibly ejected.
As you can imagine, there is much to clear up and I am being pestered by Paris--and, of course, London. I have a personal message from M. He simply said to tell you that he is much impressed, and that Treasury is greatly relieved.
Now, to business. Who killed Le Chiffre?
SMERSH.
My God. So they were on to him.
We have announced that Le Chiffre shot his accomplices and then committed suicide because he could not face an inquiry into the UNION FUNDS. Strasbourg and the north are in an UPROAR.
He was considered a PILLAR of the Communist Party in France. This story has knocked the bottom out--they're all running around like SCALDED CATS.
One last mystery. What about the MONEY? Where is it? Where did you hide it? We too have been over your room with a TOOTHCOMB.
It ISN'T there.

It is... more or less.
"On the door of each room there is a small square of black plastic with the number of the room on it. On the corridor side, of course.
"I simply opened the door and unscrewed my number plate.
"I put the folded cheque underneath it and screwed the plate back. It'll still be there.
I'm glad there's something the stupid English can teach the clever French.
I suppose you think that's paid me back for knowing what the Muntzes were up to. Incidentally, we've got them in the bag.
They were just some minor fry hired for the occasion. They'll get a few years.
OUT.
Out and don't come back.
Bond was heartened by all he had heard. He found himself thinking of Vesper as he quickly drifted off into a troubled sleep.
There were still questions to be answered, but they could wait.

CHAPTER TWENTY:
THE NATURE OF EVIL


Bond had made good progress when Mathis came to see him three days later.
Here's your cheque.
I've rather enjoyed walking around with FORTY MILLION FRANCS in my pocket, but I suppose you'd better sign it and I'll put it to your account.
There's no sign of our friend from SMERSH. Not a damn trace. It's pretty exasperating.
He's back home by now being told off for not shooting ME too. I fancy they've got QUITE a file on me in view of one or two of the jobs M's given me since the war.
He obviously thought he was being smart enough cutting his INITIAL in my hand.
What's that?
I've seen the cuts several times-- I'm pretty certain they are the Russian letter for "SH."
That would make sense; SMERSH is short for "Smyert Shpionam"-- "Death to Spies." He thinks he's labeled me as a SHPION.
M will probably say I've got to have NEW SKIN grafted over the whole of the back of my hand. It doesn't matter much--
--I've decided to RESIGN.
RESIGN?! WHAT THE HELL FOR?

When I was being BEATEN UP, I suddenly liked the idea of being ALIVE. Before Le Chiffre began, he used a PHRASE which stuck in my mind...
..."Playing Red Indians." He said that's what I had been doing. Well, I suddenly thought he might be right.
When one's young, it seems VERY EASY to distinguish between right and wrong, but as one gets older it becomes MORE DIFFICULT. At school, it's easy to pick out one's own villains and heroes.
One grows up wanting to be a HERO and kill the VILLAINS. Well, in the last few years I've killed TWO villains...
"...the first was in New York--a Japanese cipher expert cracking our codes on the thirty-sixth floor of the RCA building in the Rockefeller Center, the Japanese consulate.
"I took a room in the next-door skyscraper where I could see him working.
"Then I got a colleague and a couple of Remington thirty-thirty's with telescopic sights and silencers.

"We smuggled them up to my room and sat for days waiting for our chance.
"He shot at the man a second before me. His job was only to blast a hole through the windows so I could shoot the target through it.
"They have tough windows at the Rockefeller Center to keep the noise out.
"It worked very well.

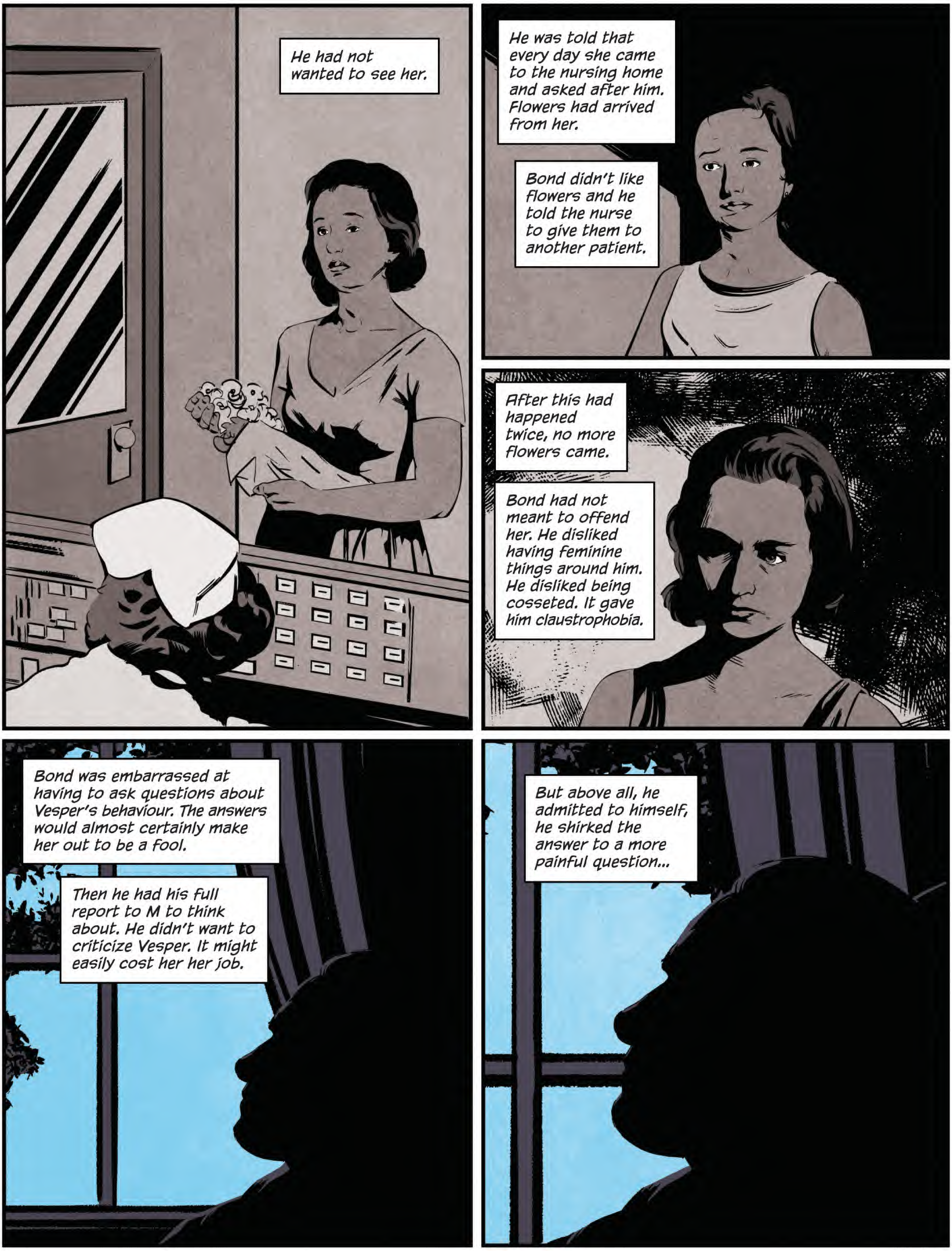
It was a pretty sound job. Nice and clean. No personal contact.
The next time in Stockholm wasn't so pretty.
CIGARETTE NO. 4 TODAY.
"I had to kill a Norwegian who was doubling against us for the Germans. He'd gotten two of our men captured--probably bumped off for all I know.
"For various reasons it had to be an absolutely silent job. I chose the bedroom of his flat and a knife. And, well--
"--he just didn't die very quickly.
For those two jobs I was awarded a Double O number in the Service. Felt pretty clever and got a reputation for being good and tough.
A Double O in our Service means you've had to kill a chap in cold blood in the course of a job.

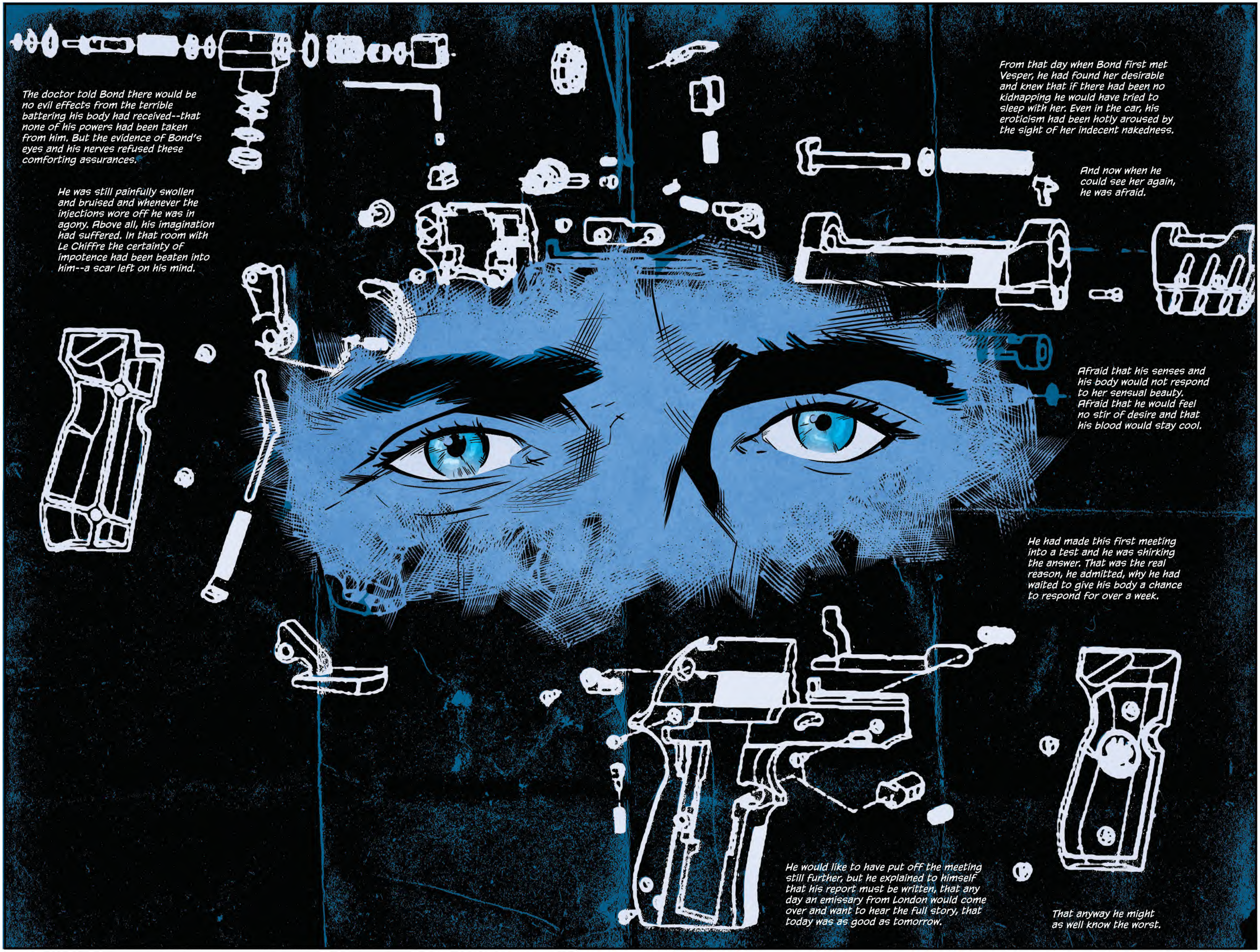
Now, that's all very fine--the HERO kills two VILLAINS.
But when the HERO Le Chiffre starts to kill the VILLAIN Bond and the villain Bond knows he isn't a villain at all, you see the OTHER SIDE of the medal. The villains and heroes get all MIXED UP.
Of course, patriotism comes along and makes it seem fairly all right. But this country-right-or-wrong business is getting a little out-of-date.
Today we are fighting communism. But if I'd been alive fifty years ago, the brand of Conservatism we have today would have been damn near called Communism.
History is moving pretty quickly these days and the heroes and villains keep on changing parts.
You mean this PRECIOUS Le Chiffre--who did his best to turn you into a EUNUCH--DOESN'T qualify as a villain?!
From the ROT you talk, anyone would think that he had been battering your HEAD instead of your...
Ha!
And what about SMERSH? I can tell you I don't like the idea of these chaps running around France killing anyone they feel has been a traitor to their precious political system. You're a bloody anarchist.
It's simple enough to say Le Chiffre was evil because he did evil things to me. If he was here now, I wouldn't hesitate to kill him...
...but out of personal revenge and not, I'm afraid, for some high moral reason or for the sake of my country.
Continue, my dear friend. Englishmen are so odd--like a nest of Chinese boxes. It takes a very long time to get to the centre of them.
And when one gets there the result is unrewarding. But the process is entertaining.

In order to tell the difference between GOOD and EVIL, we have manufactured two images representing the extremes--and we call them GOD and the DEVIL. But in doing so, we CHEATED a bit.
God is a clear image, you can see every hair on His beard. But the Devil. What does he look like?
A WOMAN!
It's all very fine, but I'm wondering whose side I ought to be on. I'm getting VERY sorry for the Devil and his disciples such as the good Le Chiffre.
The Devil has a ROTTEN time and I always like to be on the side of the underdog.
The Devil has no PROPHETS to write his TEN COMMANDMENTS and no team of authors to write his BIOGRAPHY. He has no book from which we can learn the NATURE OF EVIL in all its forms.
So, Le Chiffre was serving a WONDERFUL purpose, perhaps the HIGHEST purpose of all. By his evil existence, which FOOLISHLY I helped to destroy, he was creating a norm of BADNESS...
...by which alone, an opposite norm of GOODNESS could exist. We emerge from our short knowledge of him better and more VIRTUOUS men.
BRAVO! I'm proud of you. You ought to be TORTURED every day.
I must remember to do something EVIL this evening. Now, let's see, where shall I start--murder, arson, rape?
Ah, but our CONSCIENCE. He is crafty and will spoil our enjoyment. We should murder him first.

You can start off by resigning. Pull that trigger and you will have made a big hole in your country and your conscience. A murder and a suicide with one bullet!
As for me, I must start embracing the new cause at once.
Good. I've started already. I'm half an hour late for a meeting with the chief of police.
Now about that little problem of yours, of not knowing heroes from villains. It is, of course, difficult in the abstract.
When you get back to London you will find there are OTHER Le Chiffres seeking to destroy YOU and YOUR FRIENDS and YOUR COUNTRY. M will tell you about them.
Now that you have seen a really evil man, you will know how evil they can be and you will go after them to destroy them to protect yourself and the people you love.
You may want to be certain the target is really black, but there are plenty of really black targets around. There's still plenty for you to do, and you'll do it.
Surround yourself with human beings, my dear James. They are easier to fight for than principles.
But don't let me down and become human yourself. We would lose such a wonderful machine!

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE:
VESPER


He had not wanted to see her.
He was told that every day she came to the nursing home and asked after him. Flowers had arrived from her.
Bond didn't like flowers and he told the nurse to give them to another patient.
After this had happened twice, no more flowers came.
Bond had not meant to offend her. He disliked having feminine things around him. He disliked being cosseted. It gave him claustrophobia.
Bond was embarrassed at having to ask questions about Vesper's behaviour. The answers would almost certainly make her out to be a fool.
Then he had his full report to M to think about. He didn't want to criticize Vesper. It might easily cost her her job.
But above all, he admitted to himself, he shirked the answer to a more painful question...


The doctor told Bond there would be no evil effects from the terrible battering his body had received--that none of his powers had been taken from him. But the evidence of Bond's eyes and his nerves refused these comforting assurances.
He was still painfully swollen and bruised and whenever the injections wore off he was in agony. Above all, his imagination had suffered. In that room with Le Chiffre the certainty of impotence had been beaten into him--a scar left on his mind.
From that day when Bond first met Vesper, he had found her desirable and knew that if there had been no kidnapping he would have tried to sleep with her. Even in the car, his eroticism had been hotly aroused by the sight of her indecent nakedness.
And now when he could see her again, he was afraid.
Afraid that his senses and his body would not respond to her sensual beauty. Afraid that he would feel no stir of desire and that his blood would stay cool.
He had made this first meeting into a test and he was shirking the answer. That was the real reason, he admitted, why he had waited to give his body a chance to respond for over a week.
He would like to have put off the meeting still further, but he explained to himself that his report must be written, that any day an emissary from London would come over and want to hear the full story, that today was as good as tomorrow.
That anyway he might as well know the worst.

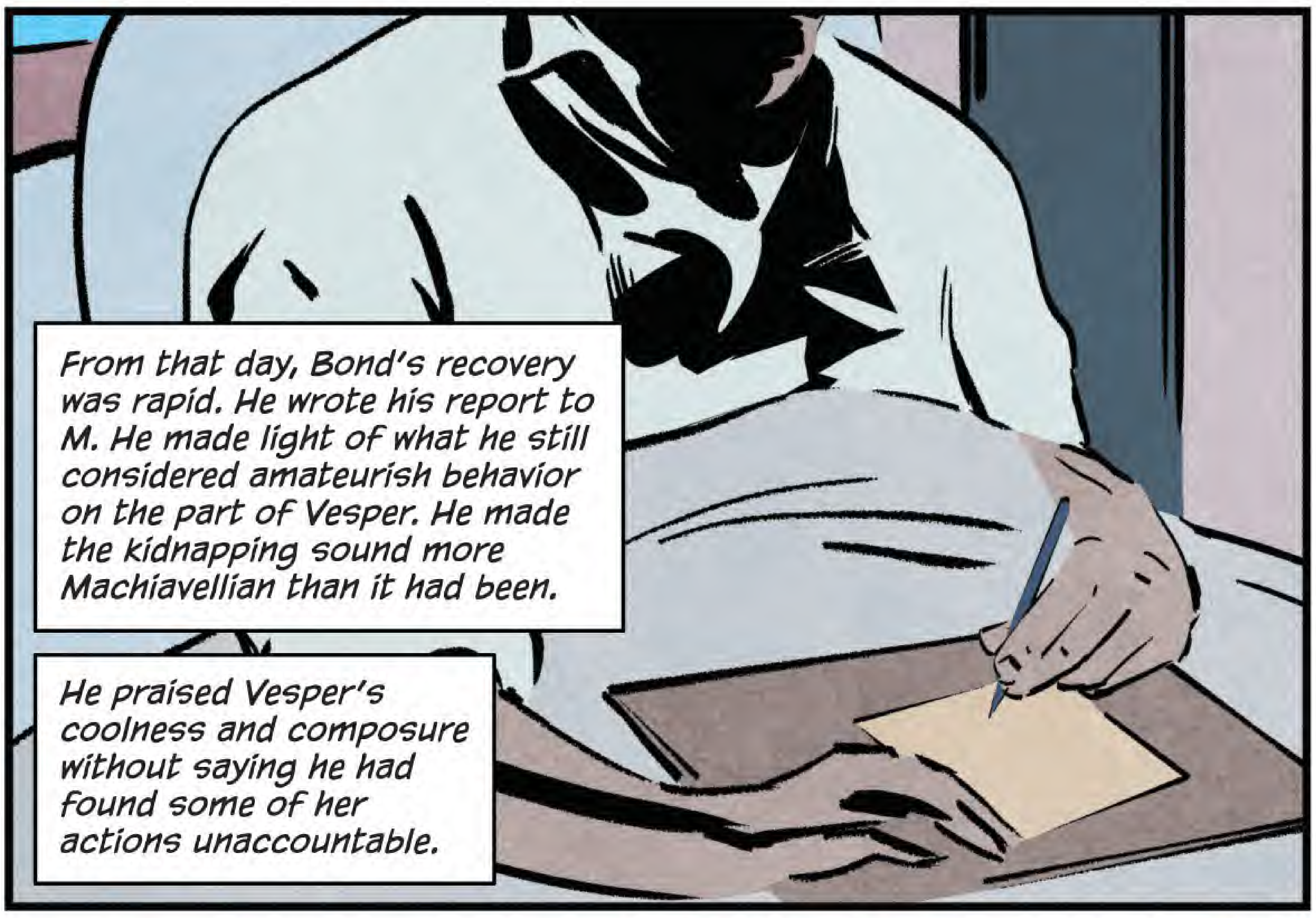
So on the eighth day, he asked for her, for the early morning when he was feeling refreshed and strong after the night's rest.
Good heavens, Vesper...
...you look absolutely SPLENDID. You must THRIVE on disaster. How have you managed to get such a wonderful SUNBURN?
I feel very guilty.
But I've been bathing every day while you've been lying here. HEAD OF S said I was to, so, well, I just thought it wouldn't help you for me to be MOPING away all day long in my room.
I found a WONDERFUL stretch of sand down the coast, and I've managed to get over the fact that it's on the way down the road to the VILLA.
The doctor says it won't be long before you're allowed up. I thought perhaps I could take you down to the beach later on.
Ehn.
God knows when I'll be able to bathe. And when I can it would probably be better for me to be alone. I don't want to frighten anybody.
Apart from ANYTHING ELSE--
--my body's a mass of scars and bruises. But you ENJOY yourself.
I just thought... I was just trying...
I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.
It's all my fault. I know it's all my fault.

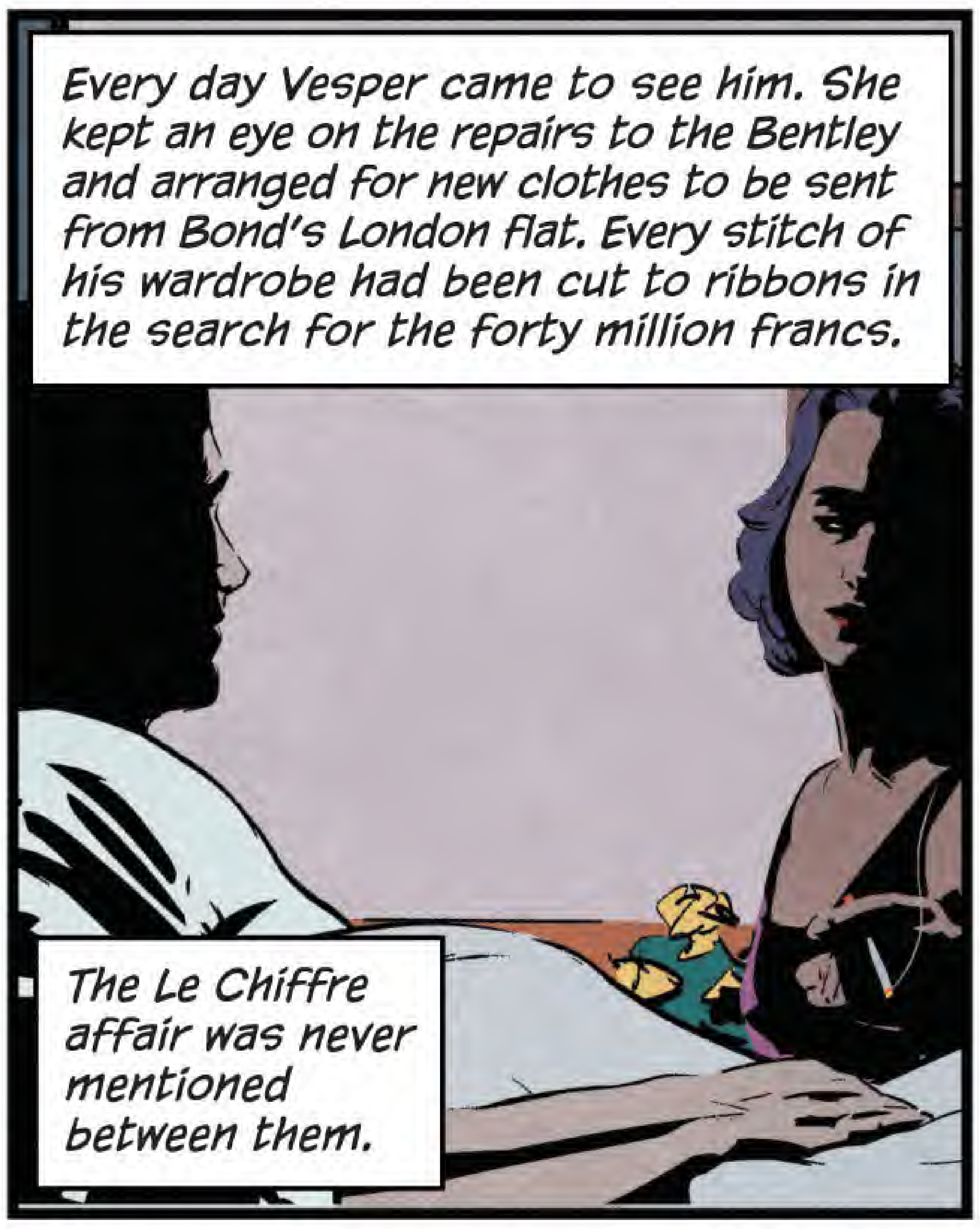
It's all right, Vesper. I'm sorry I was so rough. It's just that I was jealous of you in the sunshine while I'm stuck here.
Directly I'm well enough I'll come with you to your beach. It'll be wonderful to get out again.
Bond looked at her tenderly. Like all harsh, cold men, he was easily tipped over into sentiment. She was very beautiful, and he felt warm towards her.
He decided to make his questions as easy as possible.
For a time they talked of the visit of Head of S and of the reactions in London to the rout of Le Chiffre. The story was still being splashed all over the world.
Correspondents of the English and American papers had been at Royale trying to trace the Jamaican millionaire who had defeated Le Chiffre at the tables. They had got on to Vesper, but she covered up well.
Her story was that Bond had told her he was going on to Cannes and Monte Carlo to gamble with his winnings. The hunt had moved down to the South of France.
Mathis and the police had obliterated all other traces. The papers were forced to concentrate on the chaos in the ranks of the French Communists.
By the way, Vesper. What really happened to you after you left me in the night club? All I saw was the actual kidnapping.
I'm afraid I must have lost my head...

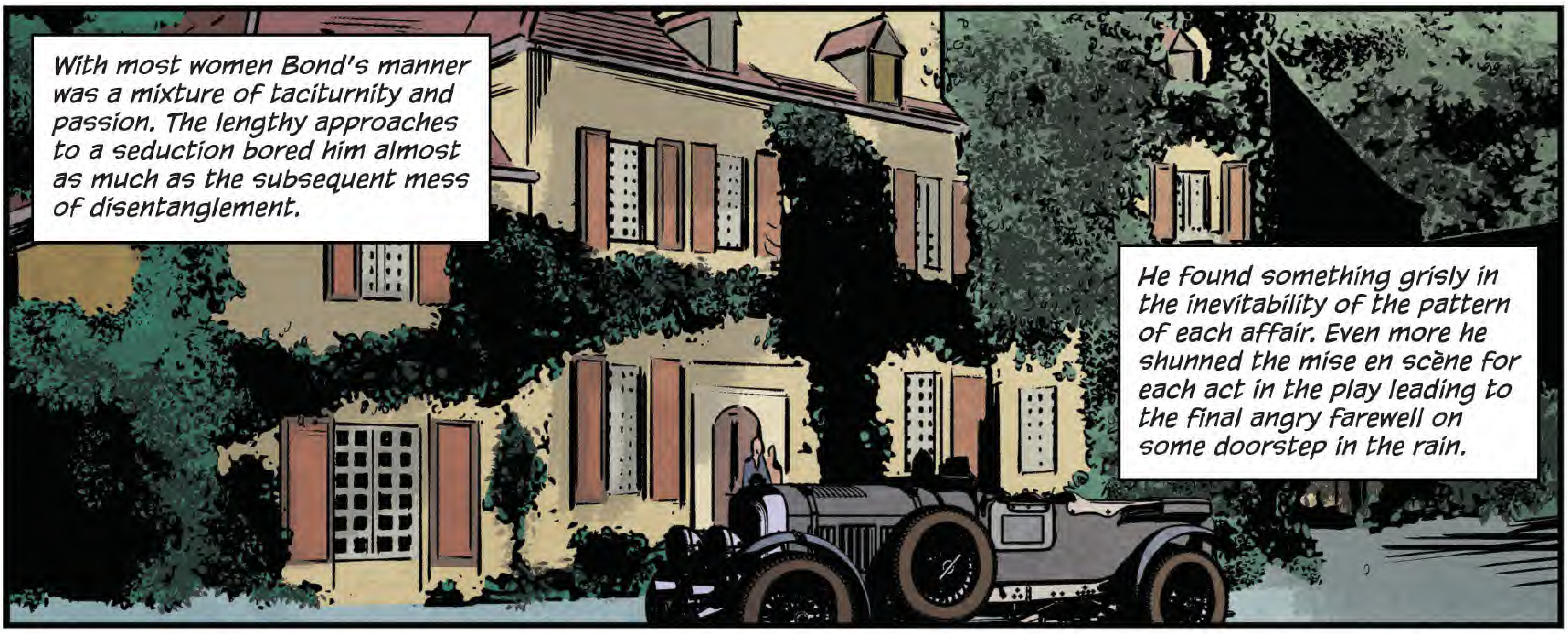
"...when I couldn't see Mathis anywhere in the entrance hall I went outside and the commissionaire asked me if I was Miss Lynd, and told me the man who had sent in the note was waiting in a car.
"I'd only known Mathis a day or two and I didn't know how he worked, so I just walked down towards the car.
"Just as I was coming up to it, Le Chiffre's two men jumped out from behind one of the other cars and simply scooped my skirt over my head.
"I managed to get an arm free and throw my bag through the window. I hope it was some use."
CERTAINLY. And they didn't TOUCH you? They didn't try and mess about with you while I was being beaten up?
No. They drank and played cards...and then they went to sleep. I suppose that was how SMERSH got them.
"I heard some odd noises--what sounded like one of them falling off his chair. Then there were some soft footsteps and a door closed.
"Then nothing until Mathis and the police burst in hours later.
I had no idea what happened to you but...I did once hear a TERRIBLE scream.

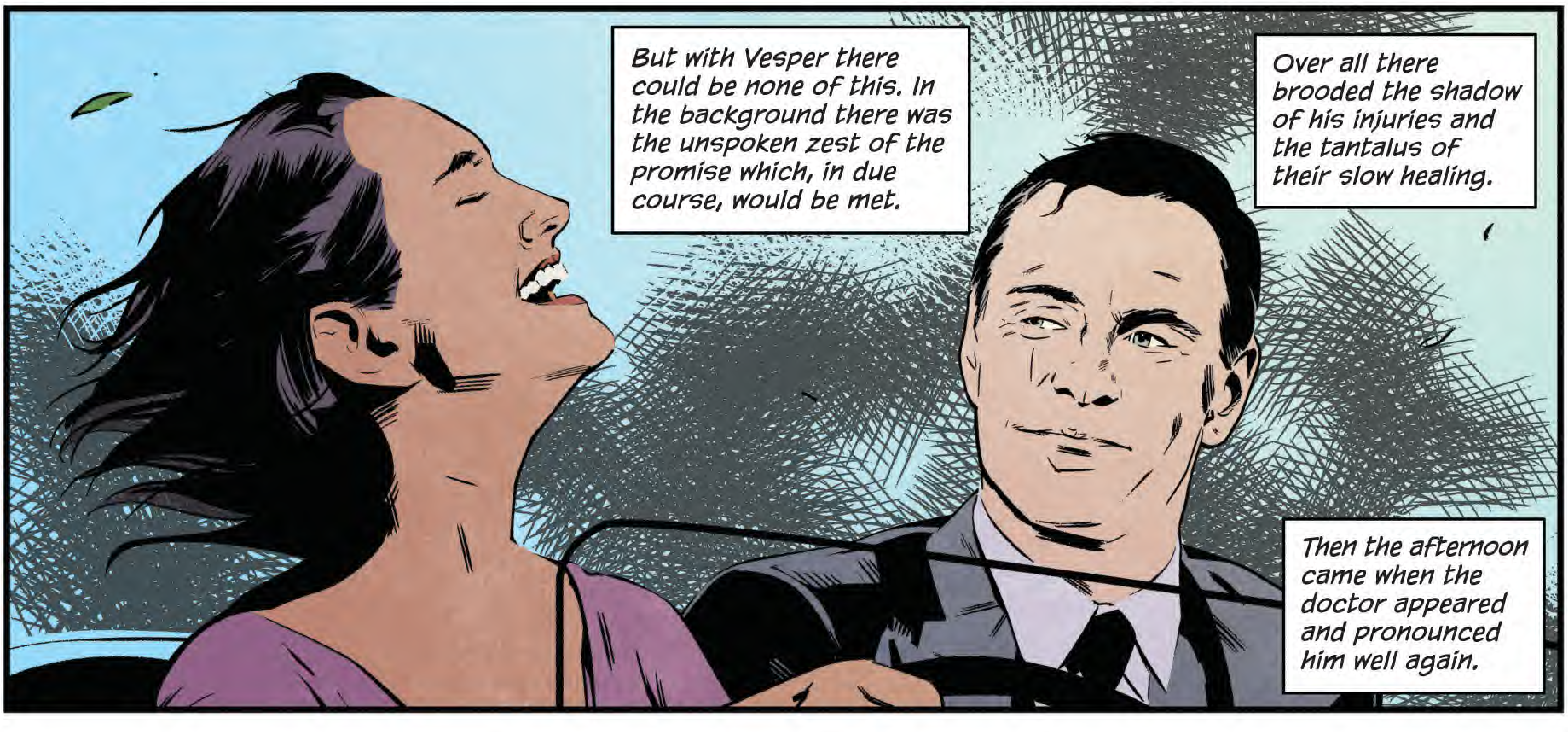
I'm afraid that must have been me.
It's HORRIBLE. The things they did to you. And it was all my fault. If only--
It certainly wasn't ANYTHING to do with you. It's all water over the dam.
You really promise? I thought you would never forgive me. I...I'll try and make it up to you.
SOMEHOW.
You'd better look out. I may hold you to that.
A promise is a promise.
Shall I come tomorrow?
Yes, please, Vesper. I'd like that.
They gazed at each other for a second. Then she went out and Bond listened until the sound of her footsteps had disappeared.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO:
THE HASTENING SALOON


From that day, Bond's recovery was rapid. He wrote his report to M. He made light of what he still considered amateurish behavior on the part of Vesper. He made the kidnapping sound more Machiavellian than it had been.
He praised Vesper's coolness and composure without saying he had found some of her actions unaccountable.


Every day Vesper came to see him. She kept an eye on the repairs to the Bentley and arranged for new clothes to be sent from Bond's London flat. Every stitch of his wardrobe had been cut to ribbons in the search for the forty million francs.
The Le Chiffre affair was never mentioned between them.


With most women Bond's manner was a mixture of taciturnity and passion. The lengthy approaches to a seduction bored him almost as much as the subsequent mess of disentanglement.
He found something grisly in the inevitability of the pattern of each affair. Even more he shunned the mise en scène for each act in the play leading to the final angry farewell on some doorstep in the rain.


But with Vesper there could be none of this. In the background there was the unspoken zest of the promise which, in due course, would be met.
Over all there brooded the shadow of his injuries and the tantalus of their slow healing.
Then the afternoon came when the doctor appeared and pronounced him well again.

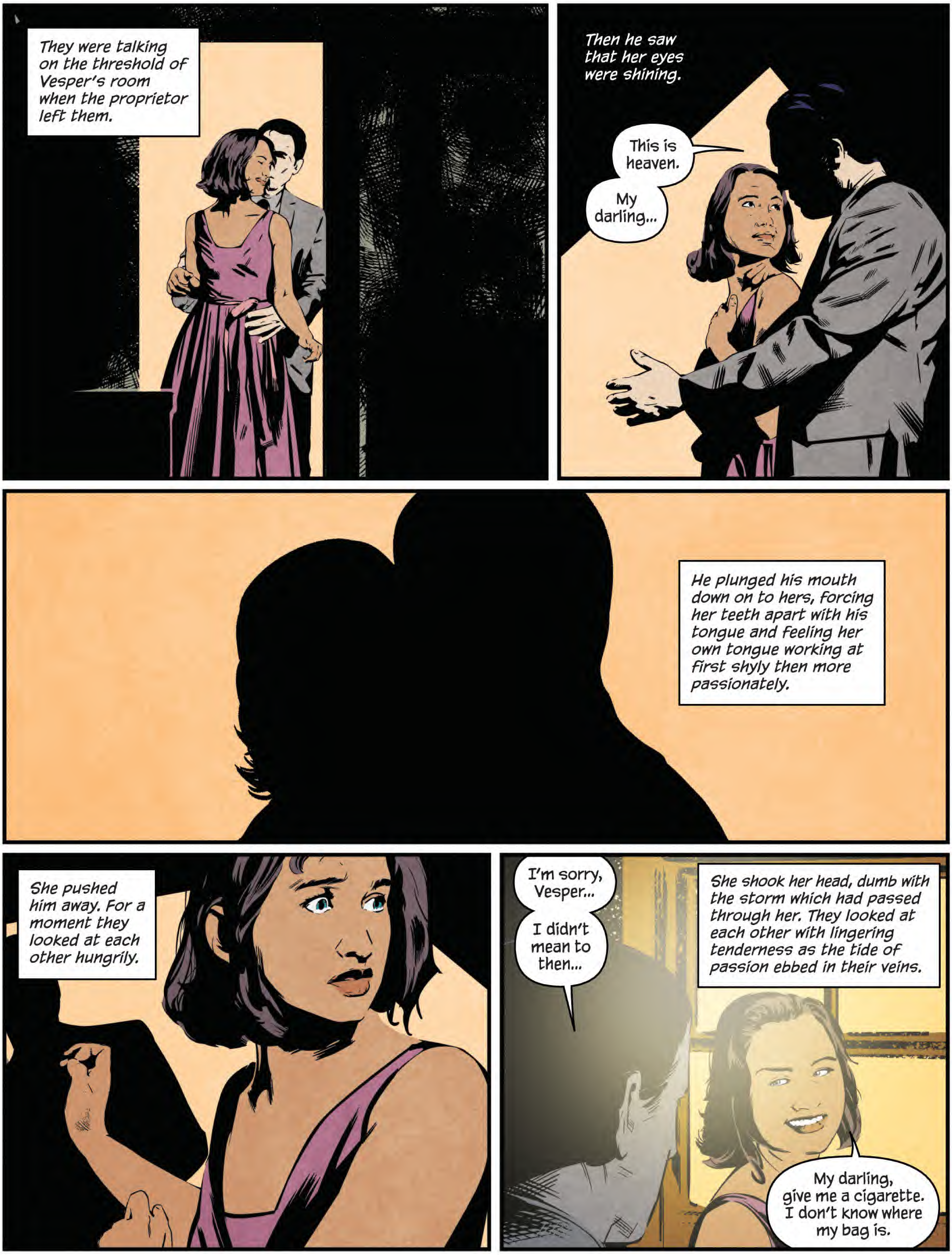
Farewells were exchanged with the nurses, and a hired car drove them away. It was three weeks from the day when he had been on the edge of death.
Now it was July and the hot summer shimmered down the coast and out to sea. Bond clasped the moment to him.
Their destination was to be a surprise for him. He had not wanted to go back to one of the big hotels and Vesper said she would find somewhere away from the town.
He was happy to be in her hands.
Their drive was spoiled by a curious incident.
Something's on your mind, Vesper.
It's nothing. ABSOLUTELY nothing. I had a silly idea we were being followed. It's just nerves, I suppose. This road is full of GHOSTS--
Under cover of a short laugh she looked back again.
LOOK!

We can't be the ONLY people using this road!
Anyway, who wants to follow US? We've done nothing wrong. It's a middle-aged commercial traveler in car-polish on his way to Le Havre, thinking of his LUNCH and his MISTRESS in Paris.
I expect you're right. Anyway, we're nearly there.
Bond decided to humour her and when they came to a small lane and slowed to turn down it, he told the driver to stop directly they were off the main road.
Hidden by the tall hedge, they watched together through the rear window.
Through the quiet hum of summer noises they could hear the car approaching. Vesper dug her fingers into his arm.
The pace of the car did not alter as it approached. They had only a brief glimpse of a man's profile as the black saloon tore by.

He LOOKED at us. I told you so. I KNEW we were being followed.
Now THEY know where we are.
BUNKUM. He was looking at that sign.
Do you really think so? Of course, you must be right. I'm sorry to be so stupid. I don't know what came over me.
I really am sorry. It's just that...I can't believe everything's over and there's no one to be frightened of any more. You must think me very stupid.
Of course not. But forget it all. The whole job's finished, wiped up. This is our holiday and there's not a cloud in the sky. Is there?
How many times in his life would he have given anything to find a lost corner like this where he could let the world go by?
And now he was to have a whole week of this. And of Vesper.
MISSING RIGHT ARM. LIKELY A WAR WOUND.
FRIENDS OF THE POLICE COMMISSAIRE AT ROYALE.
NO DANGER.
In his mind, he fingered the necklace of the days to come.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE:

TIDE OF PASSION

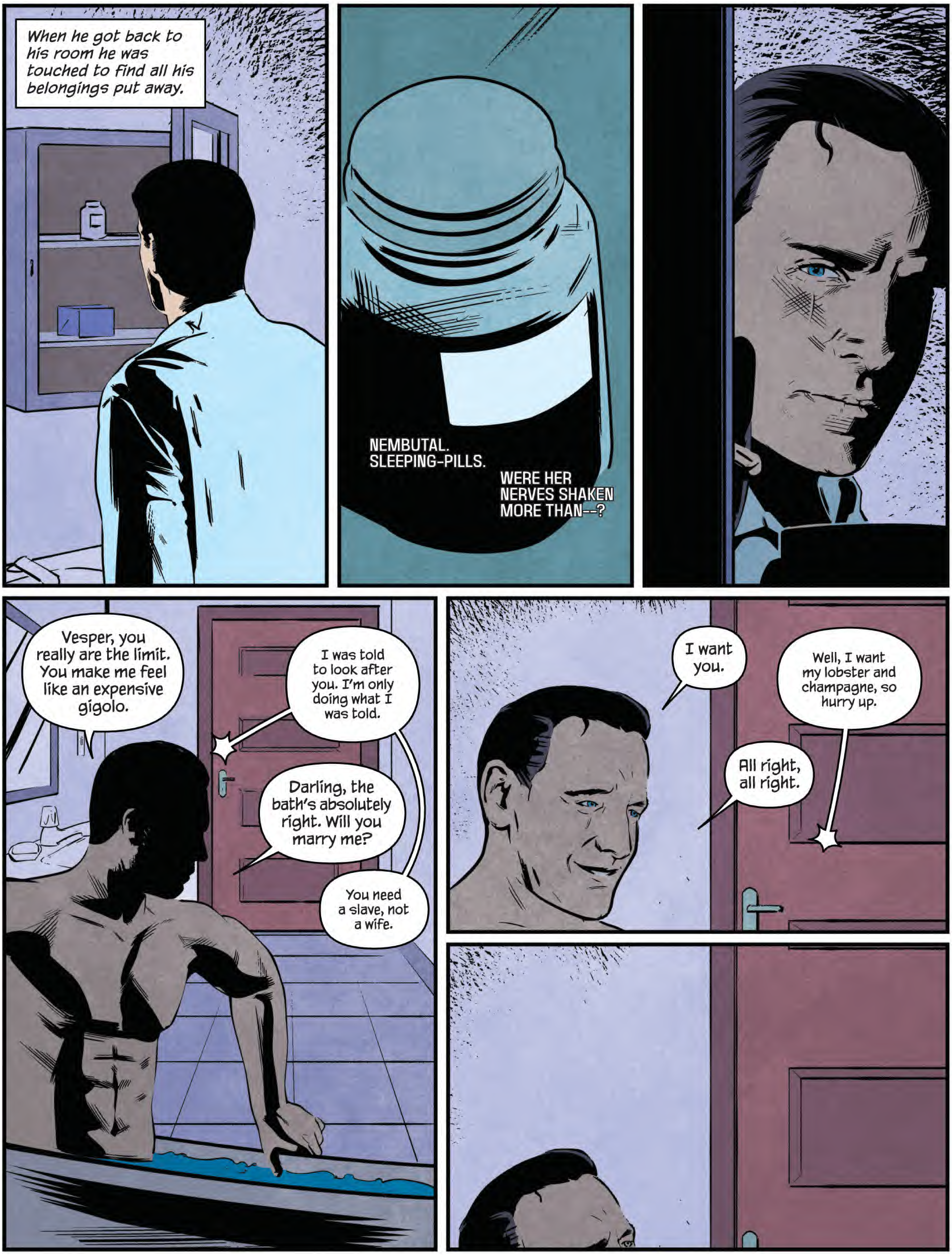

They were talking on the threshold of Vesper's room when the proprietor left them.
Then he saw that her eyes were shining.
This is heaven.
My darling...
He plunged his mouth down on to hers, forcing her teeth apart with his tongue and feeling her own tongue working at first shyly then more passionately.
She pushed him away. For a moment they looked at each other hungrily.
I'm sorry, Vesper...
I didn't mean to then...
She shook her head, dumb with the storm which had passed through her. They looked at each other with lingering tenderness as the tide of passion ebbed in their veins.
My darling, give me a cigarette. I don't know where my bag is.

Bond lit one for her and put it between her lips. She took a deep lungful of smoke and let it pour out through her mouth with a slow sigh.
It's going to take some time to get ready for dinner.
Why don't you go and bathe? I'll unpack for you.
Bond's hands were still trembling. He put one over each breast. They filled his hands and the nipples were hard against his fingers.
Not now.
All right, Vesper.
Still she looked away from him out of the window.
He looked back. She had not moved. For some reason he thought she was crying. He took a step towards her and then realized that there was nothing to say between them then.
My love...

He went downstairs and out of the house and across the terrace to the beach. He refrained from looking up to see if she was still standing at the window. If she saw him, she gave no sign.
His feelings for her were confused and he was impatient with the confusion. They had been so simple. He had intended to sleep with her as soon as he could, because he desired her.
And also because, he admitted it to himself, he wanted coldly to put the repairs to his body to the final test.
He thought they would sleep together for a few days and then he might see something of her in London. Then would come the inevitable disentanglement. But somehow she had crept under his skin.
He found her companionship easy and unexacting. There was something enigmatic about her which was a constant stimulus. She gave little of her real personality away.
She was thoughtful and full of consideration without being slavish and without compromising her spirit.
And now he knew that she was profoundly, excitingly sensual. She would surrender herself avidly without ever allowing herself to be possessed.
When he came ashore nearly a mile down the bay the shadows had already engulfed his distant pyjamas but he knew he had time to lie on the hard sand and dry before the tide of dusk reached him.
He gazed up at the empty blue sky and thought of Vesper. At that moment his mind was made up.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR:

FRUIT DÉFENDU


When he got back to his room he was touched to find all his belongings put away.
NEMBUTAL. SLEEPING-PILLS.
WERE HER NERVES SHAKEN MORE THAN--?
Vesper, you really are the limit. You make me feel like an expensive gigolo.
I was told to look after you. I'm only doing what I was told.
Darling, the bath's absolutely right. Will you marry me?
You need a slave, not a wife.
I want you.
Well, I want my lobster and champagne, so hurry up.
All right, all right.

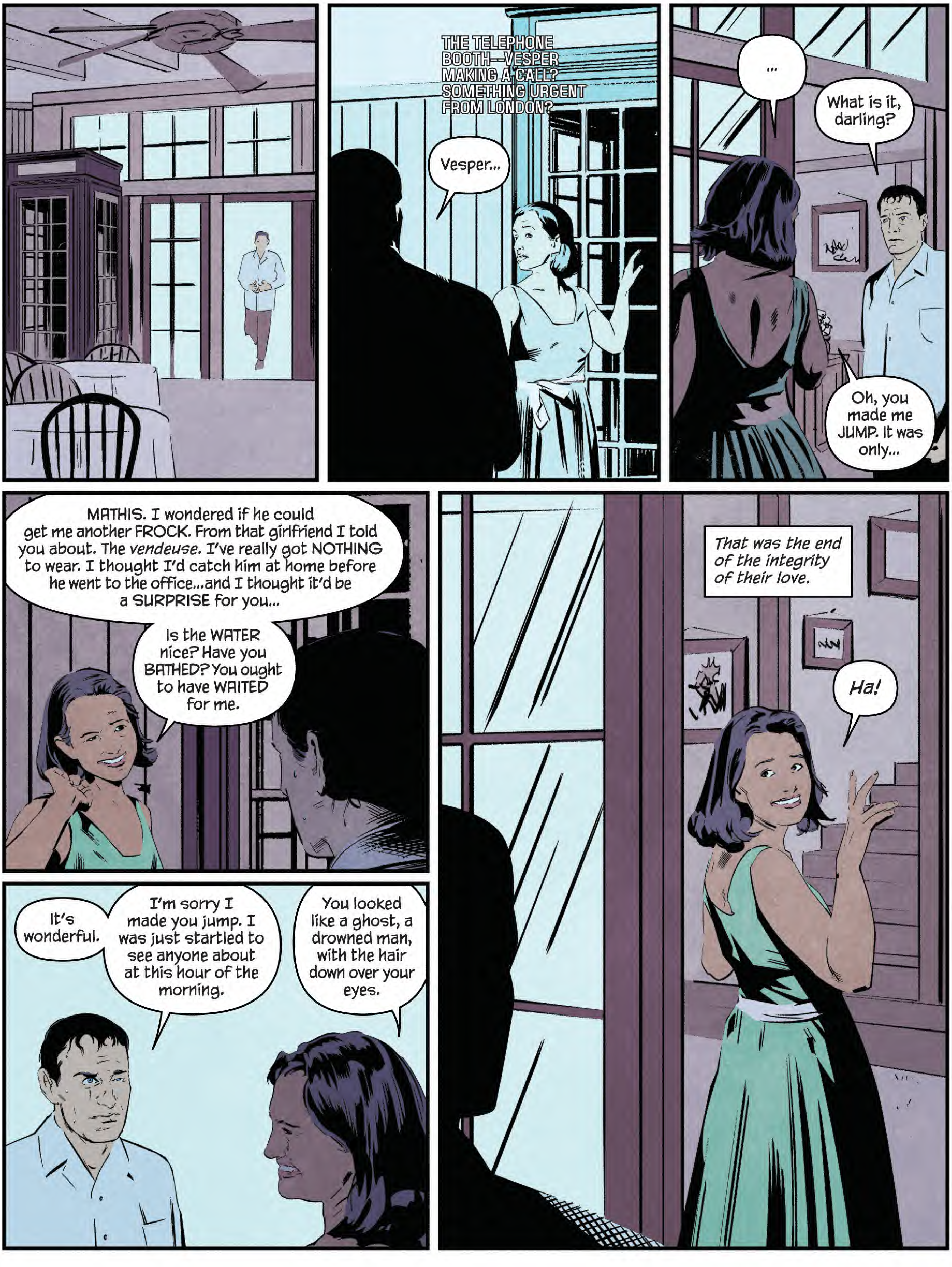
I'm famished. My room's over the kitchen and I've been tortured by the wonderful smells.
All through the meal they left unspoken their feelings for each other, but in Vesper's eyes as much as in Bond's there was excited anticipation of the night.
They let their hands and feet touch from time to time as if to ease the tension in their bodies.
I'm behaving like a pig. You always give me all the things I like best. I've never been so spoiled before.
I wish I deserved it.
When the lobster had come and gone and the second bottle of champagne was half-empty, Vesper gave a deep sigh of contentment.
What do you mean?
You really don't know much about me.
Quite enough. All I need until tomorrow and the next day and the next.
People are islands. They don't really touch. However close they are, they're really quite separate.
Let's join up and make a peninsula.

The second small shadow had passed. This too left a tiny question-mark hanging in the air. It quickly dissolved as warmth and intimacy enclosed them again.
Now, directly we've finished the STRAWBERRIES.
No. I MUST have coffee.
And brandy.
When they had had their coffee and Bond was sipping his brandy, Vesper picked up her bag and came and stood behind him.
I'm tired.
She bent down and lightly brushed his hair with her lips.
Then she was gone and a few seconds later the light came on in her room.
Bond waited until it had gone out. Then he followed her.
It was only half past nine when he stepped into her room.
The moonlight shone through the half-closed shutters and lapped at the secret shadows in the snow of her body on the broad bed.

Bond had awoken in his own room at dawn then crept past Vesper's door and out of the house to the beach.
The sea was smooth and quiet in the sunrise. The small pink waves idly licked the sand. He looked down at his body. There were only a few traces left of his injuries.
He walked slowly into the water. The mirror of the bay was unbroken except where it seemed a fish had jumped.
He took his feet off the bottom and sank, shutting his eyes, feeling the cold water comb his body and hair.
He wished that Vesper could just then come through the pines and be astonished to see him suddenly erupt from the empty seascape.
When after a full minute he came to the surface, he was disappointed. There was no one in sight.
For a time he swam and drifted. He stared up into the empty sky and saw the same answer there.
That day he would ask Vesper to marry him. He was quite certain.
It was only a question of choosing the right moment.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE:

BLACK-PATCH

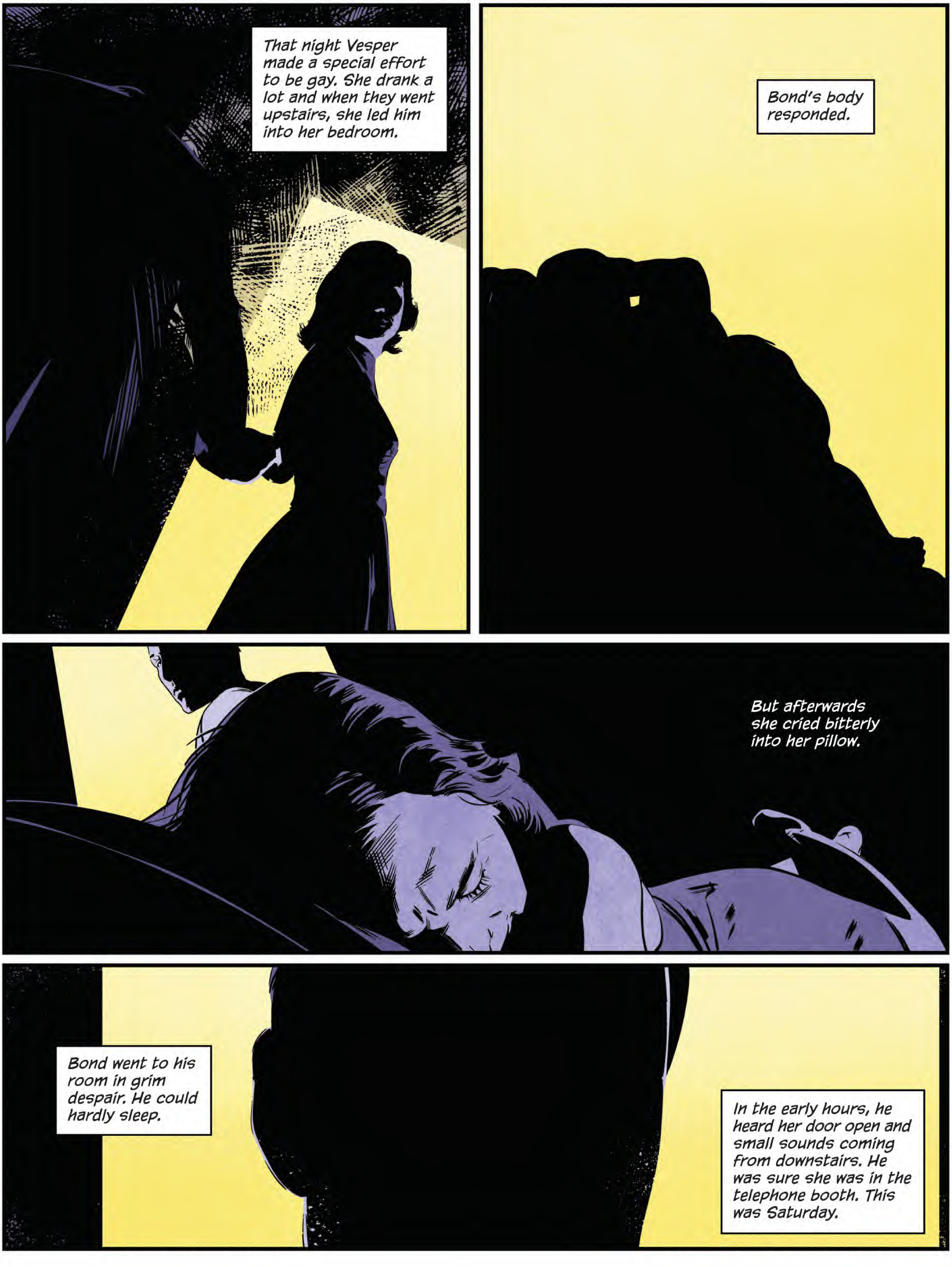

THE TELEPHONE BOOTH—VESPER MAKING A CALL? SOMETHING URGENT FROM LONDON?
Vesper...
...
What is it, darling?
Oh, you made me JUMP. It was only...
MATHIS. I wondered if he could get me another FROCK. From that girlfriend I told you about. The *vendeuse*. I've really got NOTHING to wear. I thought I'd catch him at home before he went to the office...and I thought it'd be a SURPRISE for you...
Is the WATER nice? Have you BATHED? You ought to have WAITED for me.
That was the end of the integrity of their love.
Ha!
It's wonderful.
I'm sorry I made you jump. I was just startled to see anyone about at this hour of the morning.
You looked like a ghost, a drowned man, with the hair down over your eyes.

The succeeding days were a shambles of falseness and hypocrisy...
...mingled with her tears and moments of animal passion to which she abandoned herself with a greed made indecent by the hollowness of their days.
Several times Bond tried to break down the dreadful walls of mistrust. Again and again he brought up the telephone call, but she obstinately bolstered up her story with embellishments which Bond knew she had thought out afterwards.
She even accused Bond of thinking she had another lover.
These scenes always ended in her bitter tears and in moments almost of hysteria. Each day the atmosphere became more hateful.
It seemed fantastic to Bond that human relationships could collapse into dust overnight and he searched his mind again and again for a reason.
Her misery seemed greater than his. But the mystery of the telephone conversation which Vesper angrily--almost fearfully it seemed--refused to explain was a shadow which grew darker.
He resolved that they would be able to sort the problem out the next day over lunch.

I'm sorry about startling you at the telephone, Vesper. It was nothing.
Mm hm.
What is it, darling?
SOMBRELY DRESSED. BUSINESSMAN ON HIS WAY UP THE COAST?
BLACK PATCH. WOUND?
THREAT? NO.
It's the man in the car. The man who was following us. I know it is.
Really, darling. He looks very innocent. We can't expect to have this place entirely to ourselves.

I KNOW it's the same.
Madame had unfortunately a touch of sunstroke.
Your other CUSTOMER, he reminds me of a friend who also lost an eye. They wear similar BLACK PATCHES.
I've never seen him before--he seems to be SWISS, a traveller in watches. He said he'll be passing this way again in a day or two.
The STRAIN of keeping that patch in place all day long...I suppose one gets used to it.
It is indeed VERY sad. You also have been UNLUCKY. I myself was very fortunate in the war.
By the way, Madame had an early telephone call which I must pay for. Paris. An ELYSÉE number I think.
Thank you, but the matter is regulated--there was no answer. Let me see, it was an INVALIDES number.
Hn.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX:
SLEEP WELL, MY DARLING


That night Vesper made a special effort to be gay. She drank a lot and when they went upstairs, she led him into her bedroom.
Bond's body responded.
But afterwards she cried bitterly into her pillow.
Bond went to his room in grim despair. He could hardly sleep.
In the early hours, he heard her door open and small sounds coming from downstairs. He was sure she was in the telephone booth. This was Saturday.

On Sunday the man with the black patch was back again.
Bond had telephoned Mathis in Paris and checked on the man's Peugeot. It had been hired from a respectable firm. The customer had a Swiss triptyque--his name was Adolph Gettler. He gave a Zurich bank as his address.
Mathis had got on to the Swiss police. Yes, the bank had an account in this name. Herr Gettler was connected with the watch industry.
Bond had told Vesper all this, but she had shrugged her shoulders at the information. When she saw him, she went straight up to her room.
Vesper. We can't go on like this. We are torturing each other and there is only one way of stopping it.
Either you must tell me what all this is about or we must leave. AT ONCE.
Won't you tell me? Do you know, that first morning I was coming back to ask you to marry me. Can't we go back to the beginning again?
You mean... you would have married me?
Oh my God...my God.
Tell me, my love. Tell me what's hurting you.
I'm trying to do what's best for us. Please believe me. But it's terrible. I'm in a frightful...
Go away now. I must have time to think.
We've got to do SOMETHING.

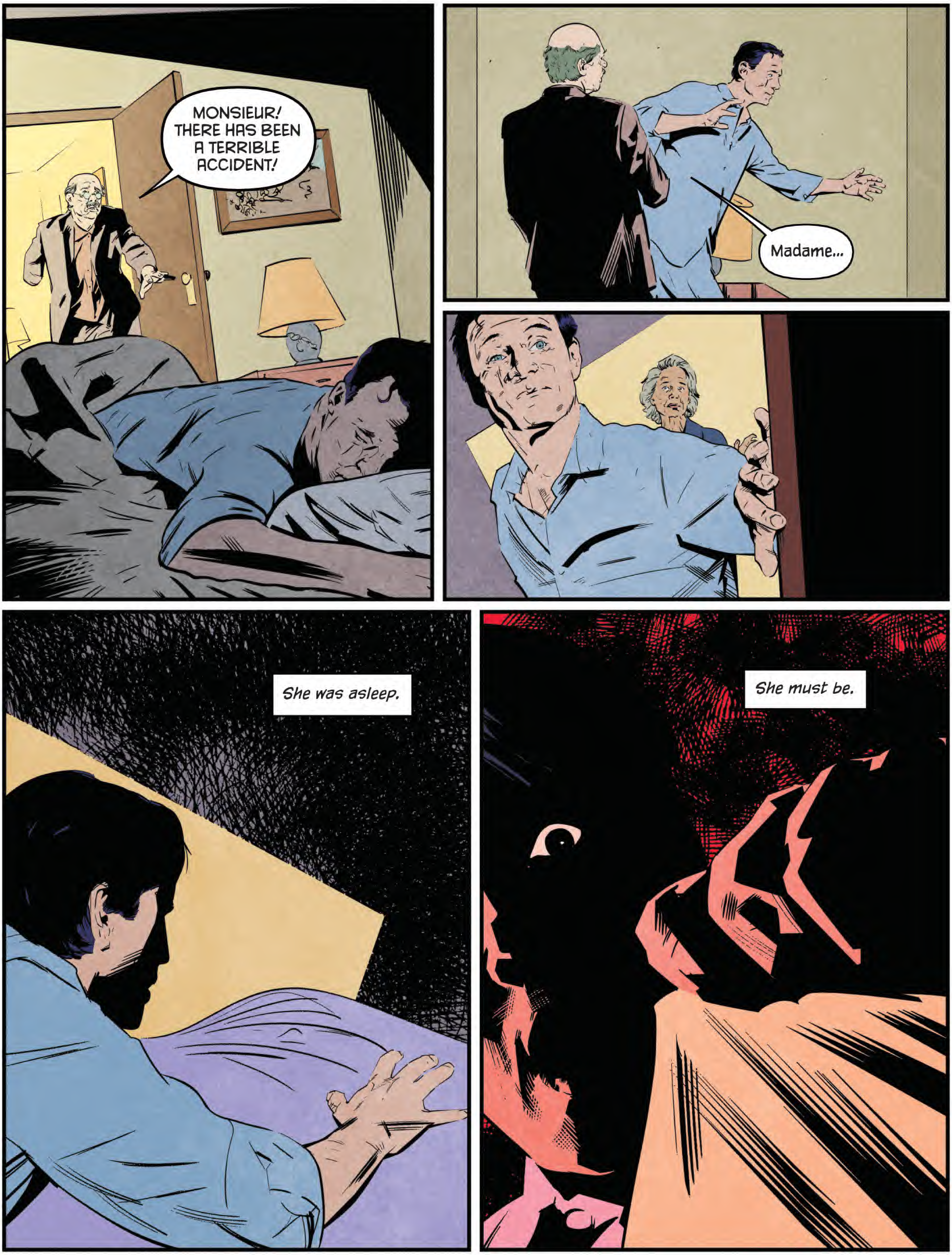
That evening most of the gayness of their first night came back. Some of her laughter sounded brittle, but Bond was determined to fall in with her new mood.
And it was only at the end of dinner that he made a passing remark to the trouble.
Don't talk about it now. Forget it now. It's all past. I'll tell you about it in the morning.
Give me some more champagne. I want a lot more. You drink much more than me. It's not fair.
They sat and drank until the bottle was finished. Then she got to her feet. She knocked against her chair and giggled.
How disgraceful. Please, James, don't be ashamed of me.
I did so want to be gay. And I am gay.
Come up quickly. I want you badly tonight.

For two hours they made slow, sweet love in a mood of happy passion which the day before Bond would never have thought they could regain.
The barriers of self-consciousness and mistrust seemed to have vanished.
The words they spoke to each other were innocent and true again.
There was no shadow between them.

Bond slept for a while in her arms. Then...
You must go now.
As if to take back her words she held him more closely to her, murmuring endearments and pressing her body down the whole length of his.
Good night, Vesper.
Look at me...and let me look at you.
She examined every line on his face as if she was seeing him for the first time.
Good night, my dearest love.
Sleep well, my darling. Don't worry. Everything's all right now.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN:

THE BLEEDING HEART


MONSIEUR! THERE HAS BEEN A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT!
Madame...
She was asleep.
She must be.

She was just as she would look and yet, and yet she was so still, no movement, no pulse, no breath.
That was it. There was no breath.
NEMBUTAL. EMPTY.
Monsieur...
Please notify the Commissaire. I will be in my room when he wants me.

My darling James, I love you with all my heart and I hope you still love me because, now, with these words, this is the last moment that your love will last.
So good-bye, my sweet love, while we still love each other. Good-bye, my darling.
I am a double agent for the Russians. I was taken on a year after the war and I have worked for them ever since.
I was in love with a Pole in the RAF. Until you, I still was. After the war he was trained by M and dropped back into Poland.
They caught him and by torturing him they found out about me. They came after me and told me he could live if I would work for them.
He was allowed to write to me. The letter arrived on the fifteenth of each month. I couldn't bear the idea of a fifteenth coming round without his letter. It would mean that I had killed him.
I told them you had this job at Royale, what your cover was. That was why they knew about you before you arrived.
I tried to give them as little as possible. You must believe me about this.
Then I had to stage that kidnapping. They didn't hurt me because I was working for MWD. But when I found out what had been done to you--even though it was Le Chiffre--I couldn't go on.
By that time I had begun to fall in love with you. They wanted me to find out things from you, but I refused. I knew my lover in Poland would have to die.
But they were afraid I would talk, and I got a final warning that SMERSH would come for me if I didn't obey them.
Then I saw the man with the black patch and I found he had been making inquiries about my movements. I hoped I could shake him off. I decided we would have an affair and I would escape to South America. I hoped I would have a baby of yours.
But they followed us. You can't get away from them.
I knew it would be the end of our love if I told you. I could either wait to be killed by SMERSH--and perhaps get you killed too--or I could kill myself.
There it is, my darling. You can't stop me calling you that or saying I love you. I am taking that with me and the memories of you.

It's late now and I'm tired, and you're just through two doors. But I've got to be brave. You might save my life, but I couldn't bear the look in your dear eyes.
My love, my love.
[redacted]!
While he was getting through to London, he calmly reviewed the facts of Vesper's letter. They all fitted. The little shadows and question-marks--which his instinct had noted but his mind rejected--all stood out now like signposts.
He saw her now only as a spy. Their love and his grief were relegated to the boxroom of his mind. Later, perhaps, they would be dragged out, dispassionately examined, and then bitterly thrust back with other sentimental baggage he would forget.
His mind was absorbed with the consequences--covers blown, codes broken, secrets leaked. It was ghastly.
Suddenly Mathis's words came back to him: "There are plenty of really black targets around." How soon Mathis had been proved right and how soon his own little sophistries had been exploded in his face.
While Bond had been playing Red Indians, the real enemy had been working quietly, coldly, without heroics, right there at his elbow.
They just got their documents on a tray while the cool secret agent with a Double O number was gallivanting around the world.
Well, it was not too late. Here was a target for him, right to hand. He would take on SMERSH and hunt it down.

SMERSH was the spur. Be faithful, spy well, or you die. Inevitably and without any question, you will be hunted down and killed.
It was the same with the whole Russian machine. Fear was the impulse. It was always safer to advance than to retreat. Retreat, evade, betray, and the bullet would never miss.
But now he would attack the arm that held the whip and the gun.
The white-collar boys could spy, and catch the spies. He would go after the threat behind the spies, the threat that made them spy.
BRRINNG
When the telephone rang, it was "the Link," the outside liaison officer who was the only man in London he might telephone from abroad. Then only in dire necessity.
This is 007 speaking. This is an open line. It's an emergency. Can you hear me? Pass this on at once. 3030 was a double, working for Redland.
Yes, dammit, I said "was."

"The bitch is dead now."

BONUS MATERIAL

Creating Casino Royale: From Script to Final

SCRIPT PAGE THREE BY VAN JENSEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. BOND-VIEW. Big panel. This is a cutaway view. On the left side is Bond, standing next to the cashier, handing over his chips. On the right is the cashier, on a stool. Behind the table, in front of the cashier, is a shelf with spots for cash (francs) and chips. There's also a handgun (a Beretta pistol) and a billy club next to them, within easy grasp. The cashier is smiling, friendly, but his hand is right next to the gun.

1 NARRATION:
Bond was not personally concerned with robbing the casino, but only interested.

2 CASHIER:
Good evening, Monsieur Bond.

3 LABEL (next to cash):
Hundred-thousand and ten-thousand Franc notes.

4 LABEL (next to chips):
Plaques.

5 LABEL (next to gun):
Colt .45 caliber pistol.

Panel 2. Bond walks away, stuffing a sheaf of cash into his jacket pocket. He's headed toward the exit.

6 NARRATION:
It would take ten good men to rob the casino, and they would have to kill one or two employees. Anyway, you probably couldn't find ten non-squeal killers in France, or in any other country, for that matter.

Panel 3. BOND-VIEW. Bond walks through the doors of the gambling part of the casino, double doors that swing outward. Bond hands a bit of cash as a tip to a bored-looking man who watches the doors. There's a small electric foot-switch, basically a pedal, next to where the man stands (could use an inset to zoom in on this). Bond notices it, but in a discrete way.

7 MAN:
Merci.

8 NARRATION:
Any hint of trouble, and the man will activate the foot-switch, which will lock the doors to bar entry or exit.

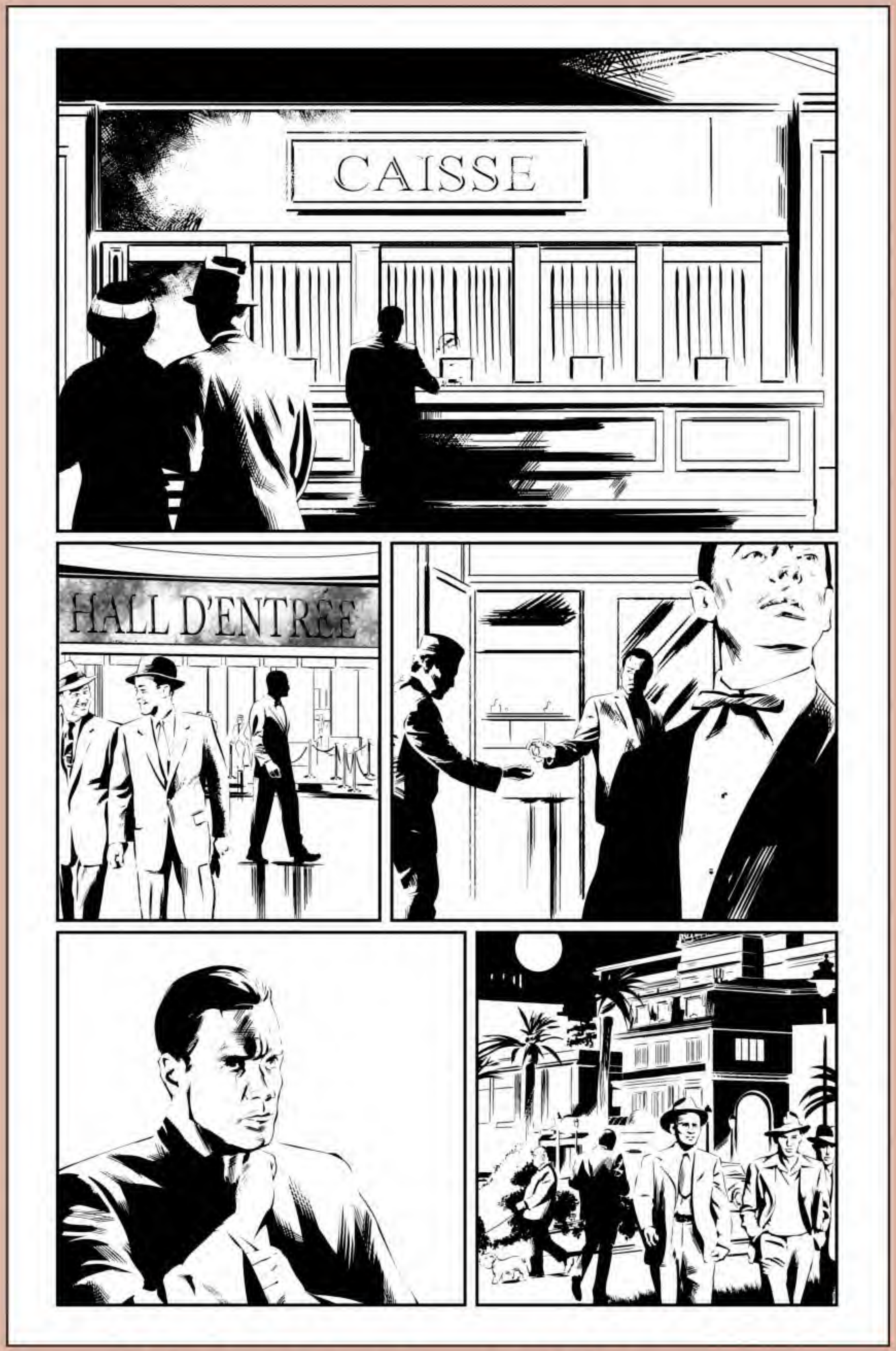
Panel 4. Cut outside. Bond walks outside, down the steps of the Casino, toward the street. It's late night, but the building is illuminated with electric lights. Stark shadows all around.

9 NARRATION:
Bond made up his mind that Le Chiffre would in no circumstance try to rob the casino and he put the contingency out of his mind.

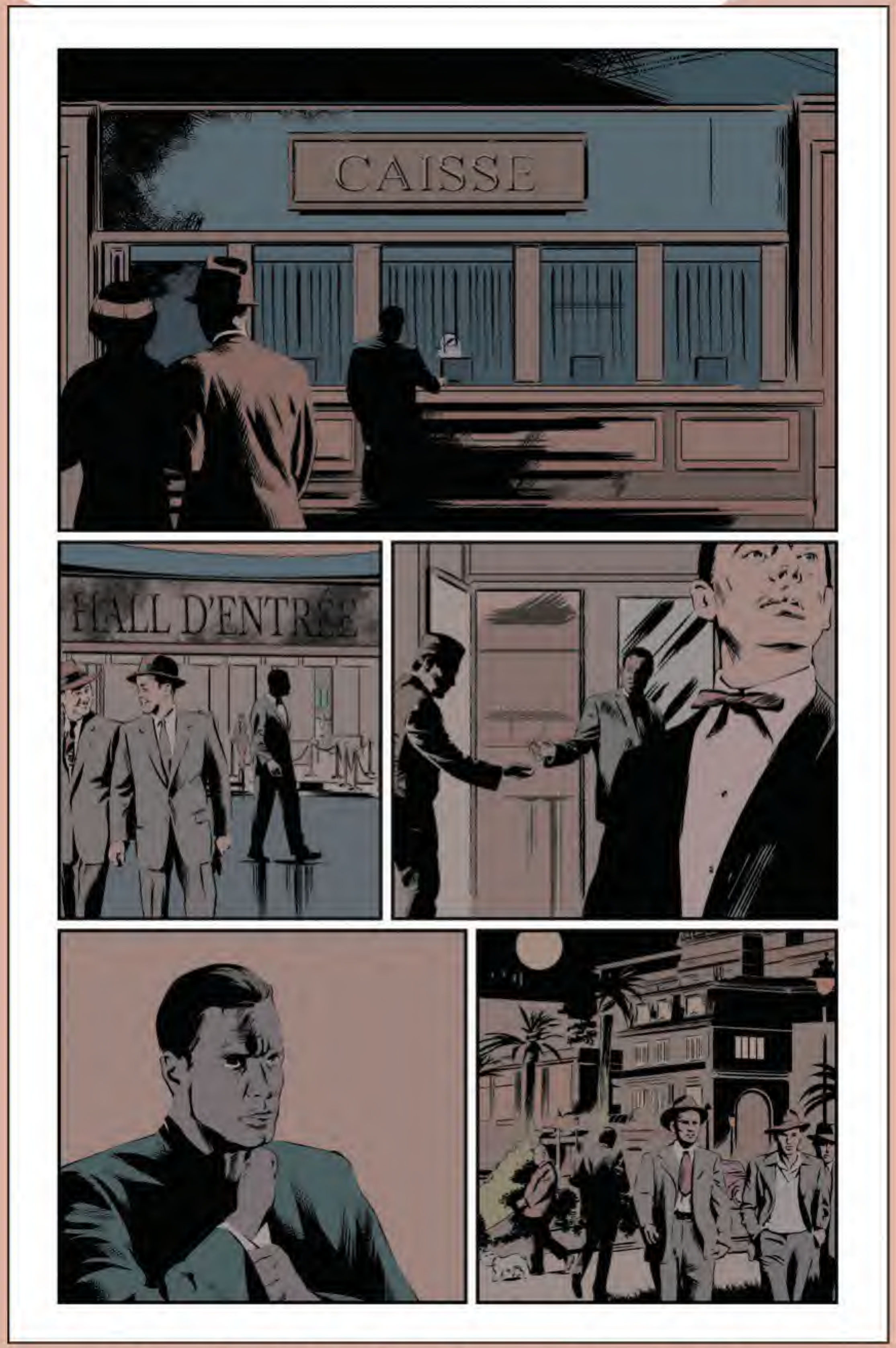
Panel 5. Bond walks across the gravel boulevard, headed toward his hotel, the Hôtel Splendide, with a big sign bearing its name. It's akin to the casino. Once, it was swank. But it has seen better days. This is the English channel coast of France, so make sure to pull some stock images for the proper foliage. This is a resort area, so broad streets, careful landscaping. Vehicles should be European, late 1940s and early 1950s models.

10 NARRATION:
He could feel his eyes filling their sockets. The front of his face, his nose and antrum, were congested. He breathed the sweet night air deeply and focused his senses and wits.

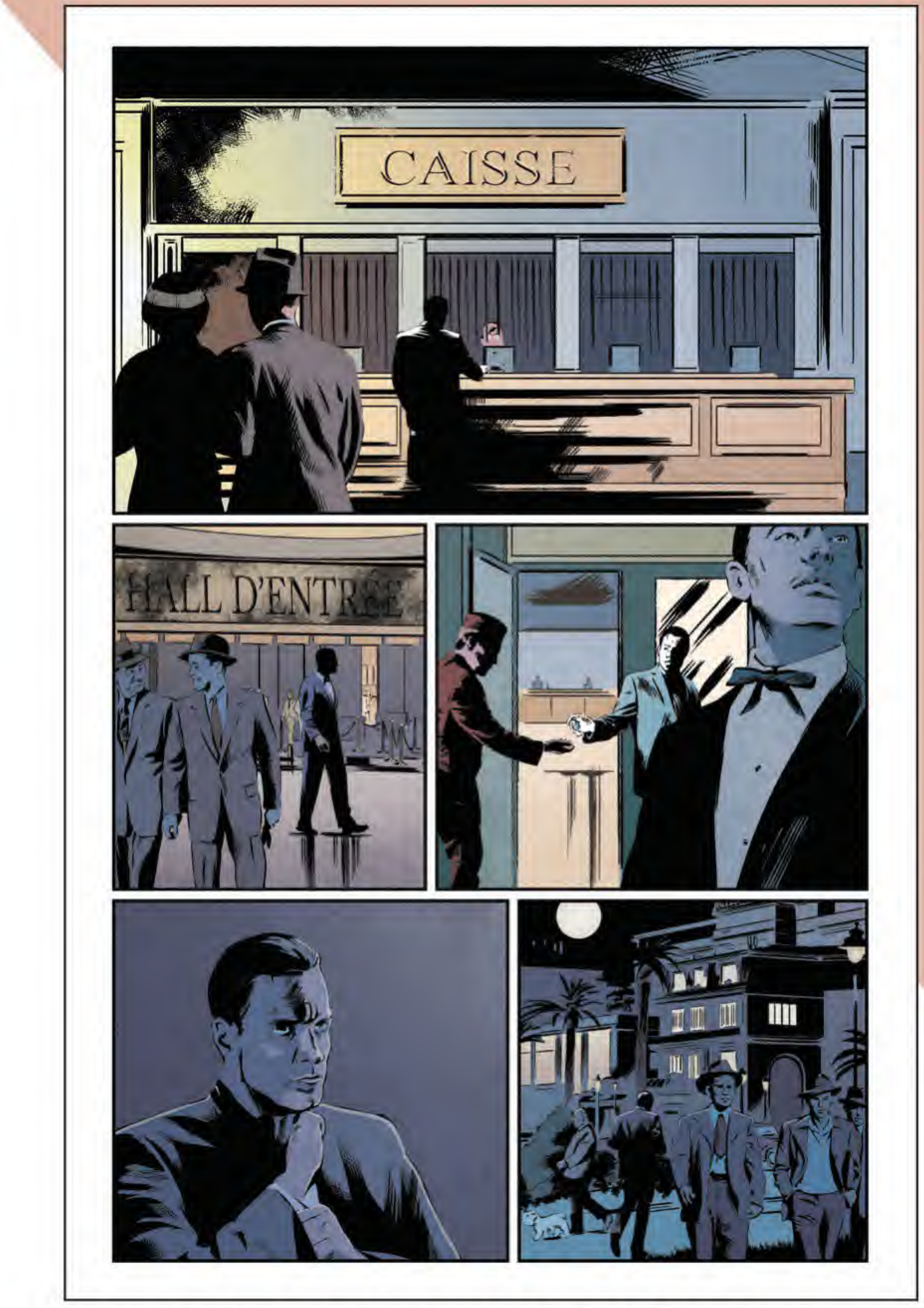
11 NARRATION:
He wanted to know if anyone had searched his room since he had left it before dinner.


CAISSE
HALL D'ENTRÉE

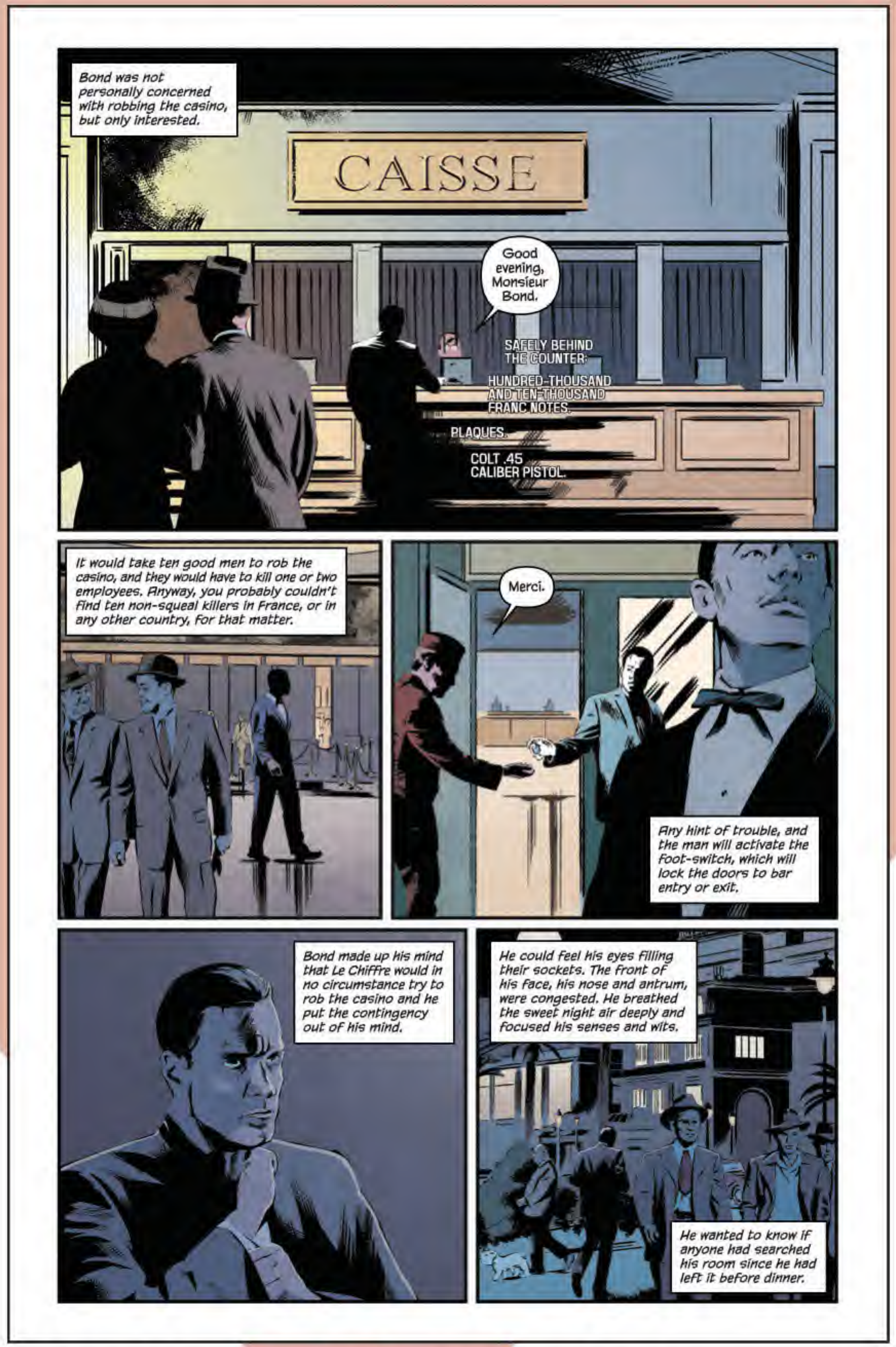
page 3 line art by Dennis Calero


CAISSE
HALL D'ENTRÉE

page 3 color flats by James Penafiel


CAISSE
HALL D'ENTRÉE

page 3 final colors by Chris O'Halloran


Bond was not personally concerned with robbing the casino, but only interested.
CAISSE
Good evening, Monsieur Bond.
SAFELY BEHIND THE COUNTER:
HUNDRED-THOUSAND AND TEN-THOUSAND FRANC NOTES.
PLAQUES.
COLT .45 CALIBER PISTOL.
It would take ten good men to rob the casino, and they would have to kill one or two employees. Anyway, you probably couldn't find ten non-squeal killers in France, or in any other country, for that matter.
Merci.
Any hint of trouble, and the man will activate the foot-switch, which will lock the doors to bar entry or exit.
Bond made up his mind that Le Chiffre would in no circumstance try to rob the casino and he put the contingency out of his mind.
He could feel his eyes filling their sockets. The front of his face, his nose and antrum, were congested. He breathed the sweet night air deeply and focused his senses and wits.
He wanted to know if anyone had searched his room since he had left it before dinner.

page 3 letters by Simon Bowland

SCRIPT PAGE SEVENTEEN BY VAN JENSEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. Mathis lights a cigarette, enjoying this. We want to play Mathis as a bit of a comedic character. He's being sexist as hell, but he's just a suave French stereotype.

1 MATHIS:
You will be pleased with your Number Two. She is very beautiful. Black hair, blue eyes and splendid…er…protuberances. Back and front.

Panel 2. Mathis takes a drag on the cigarette. Bond frowns even more pronouncedly.

2 MATHIS:
And she is a wireless expert which, though sexually less interesting, makes her a perfect employee of Radio Stentor and assistant to myself.

3 MATHIS:
She will be on hand in case your new radio breaks down. All new machines have troubles in the first day or two--

Panel 3. Mathis exhales a plume of smoke. Bond grows even more annoyed.

4 MATHIS:
--And occasionally at night.

5 BOND:
What the hell do they want to send a woman for? Do they think this is a bloody picnic?

Panel 4. Mathis gestures at Bond with the cigarette. Bond grunts, still dubious.

6 MATHIS:
Calm yourself, my dear James. She is as serious as you could wish and cold as an icicle. What is more natural than that you should pick up a pretty girl here?

7 MATHIS:
As a Jamaican millionaire, you would look naked without one.

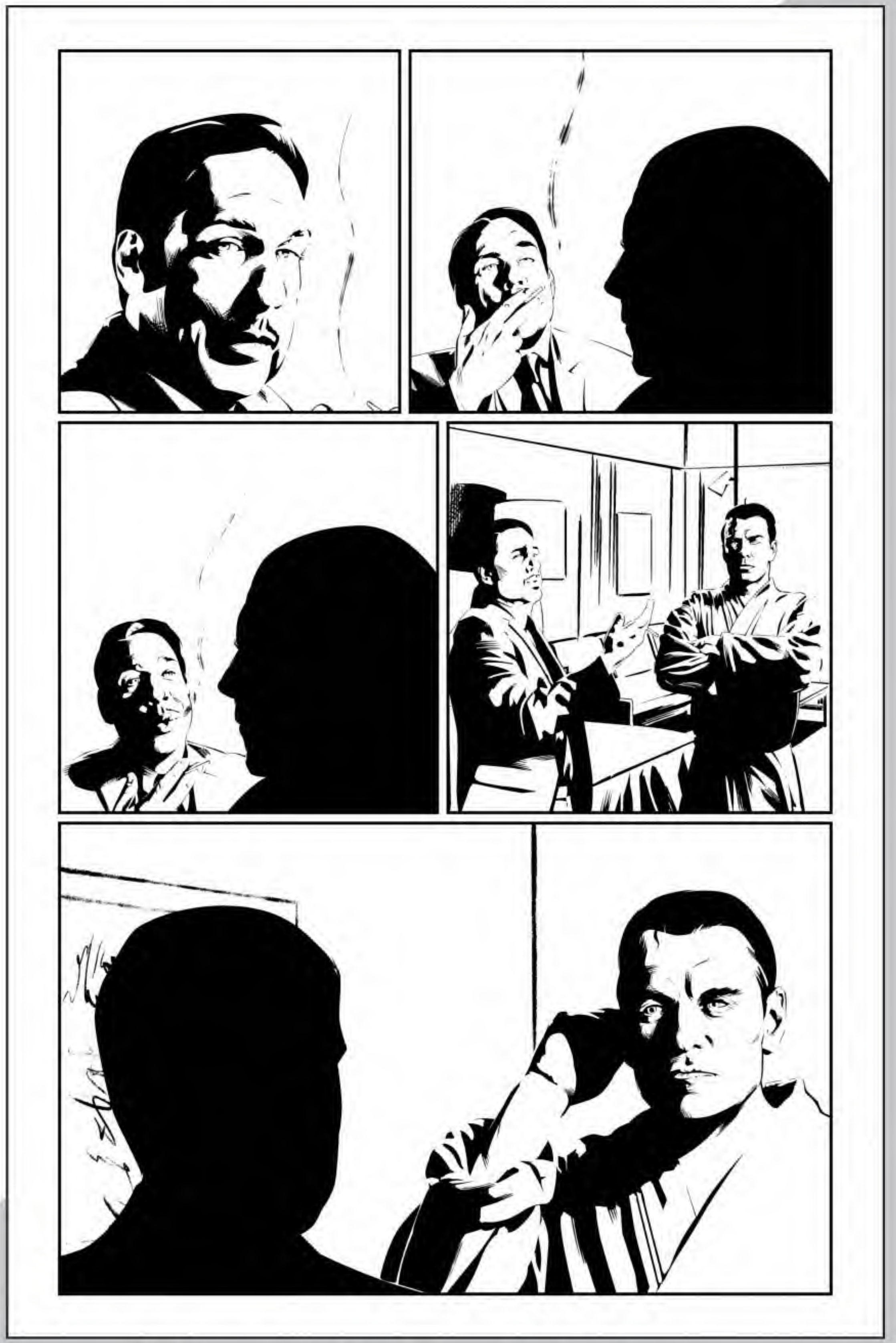
8 BOND:
Any other surprises?

Panel 5. Mathis gestures with the cigarette. Bond is troubled at the news.

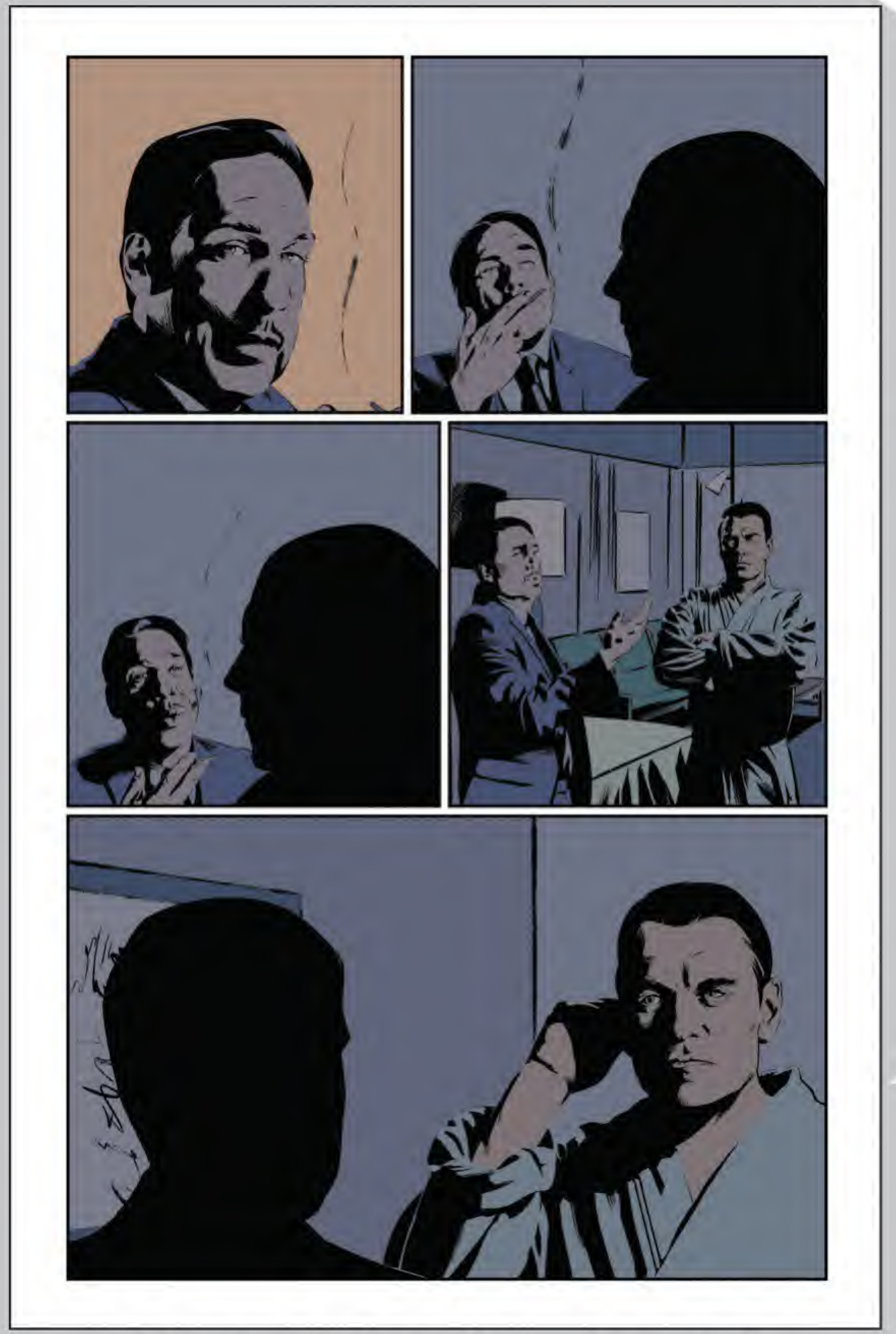
9 MATHIS:
Le Chiffre has two guards with him. They look like pretty capable fellows. One has been seen visiting a little pension where three rather subhuman characters checked in two days ago. They may be part of the team.

10 MATHIS:
They speak Bulgarian. They're stupid, but obedient. The Russians use them for simple killings…or as fall-guys for complicated ones.

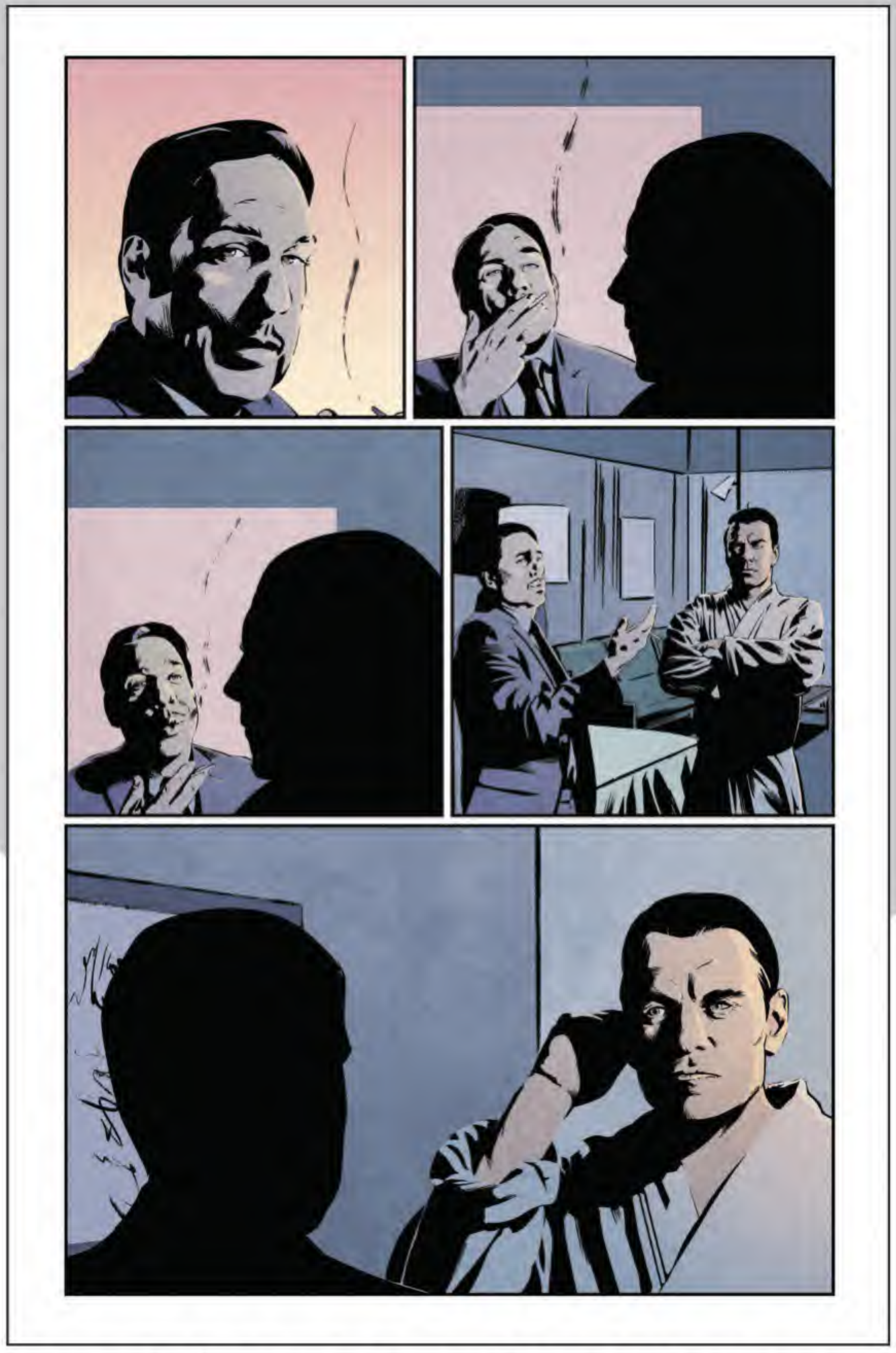
11 BOND:
Thanks very much. Which is mine to be?



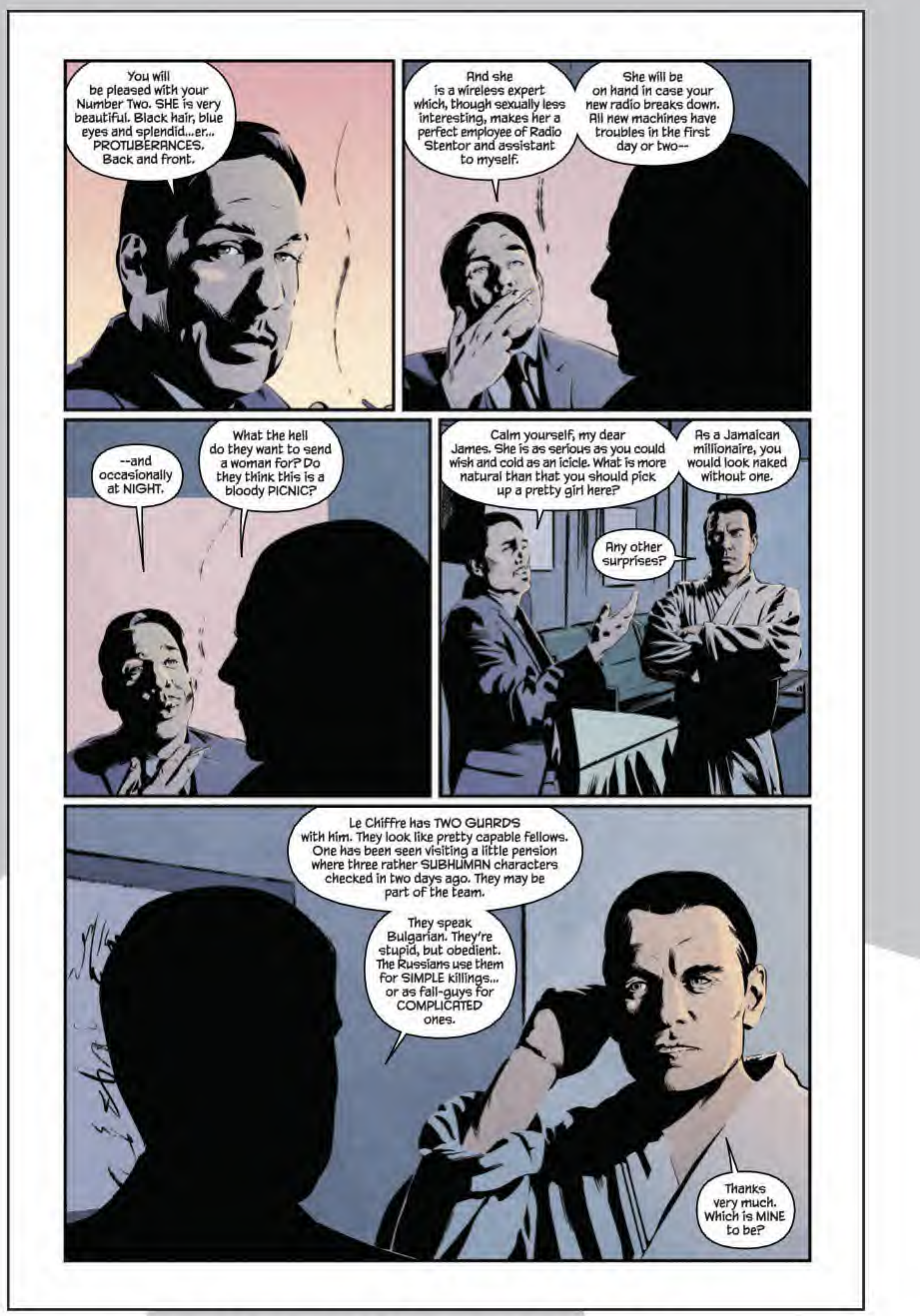
page 17 line art by Dennis Calero



page 17 color flats by James Penafiel



page 17 final colors by Chris O'Halloran


You will be pleased with your Number Two. SHE is very beautiful. Black hair, blue eyes and splendid...er... PROTUBERANCES. Back and front.
And she is a wireless expert which, though sexually less interesting, makes her a perfect employee of Radio Stentor and assistant to myself.
She will be on hand in case your new radio breaks down. All new machines have troubles in the first day or two--
--and occasionally at NIGHT.
What the hell do they want to send a woman for? Do they think this is a bloody PICNIC?
Calm yourself, my dear James. She is as serious as you could wish and cold as an icicle. What is more natural than that you should pick up a pretty girl here?
As a Jamaican millionaire, you would look naked without one.
Any other surprises?
Le Chiffre has TWO GUARDS with him. They look like pretty capable fellows. One has been seen visiting a little pension where three rather SUBHUMAN characters checked in two days ago. They may be part of the team.
They speak Bulgarian. They're stupid, but obedient. The Russians use them for SIMPLE killings... or as fall-guys for COMPLICATED ones.
Thanks very much. Which is MINE to be?

page 17 letters by Simon Bowland

SCRIPT PAGE TWENTY FIVE BY VAN JENSEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. Mathis and Vesper are on the ground, singed and scraped but otherwise unharmed. Everything is tinged red from a fire outside on the street. Everything is a mess. COLOR NOTE: We want to imply the feel of dissonance, of a loud, unsteady buzz, of all noise being drowned out by the impact of the explosion, a ringing in everyone's ears.

[No dialogue]

Panel 2. Mathis and Vesper start to pick themselves up. Around them, the bar is a mess, bottles toppled off shelves. Patrons run wildly for the exits.

[No dialogue]

Panel 3. Mathis helps Vesper to her feet. His eyes are full of dread.

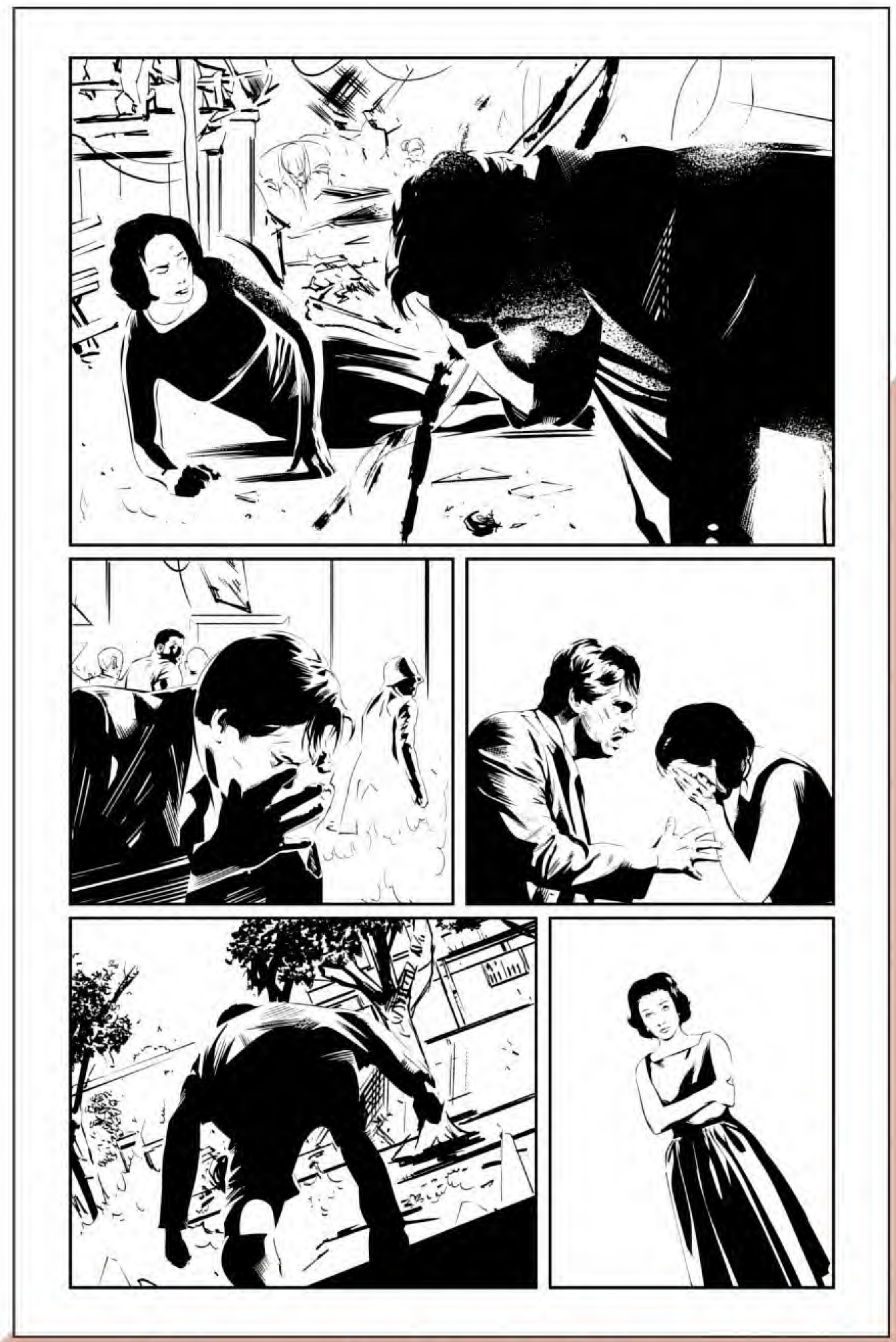
1 MATHIS (super quiet, muffled by the ringing in her ears):
Stay there.

Panel 4. Mathis hurdles himself through the empty window frame, rushing outside.

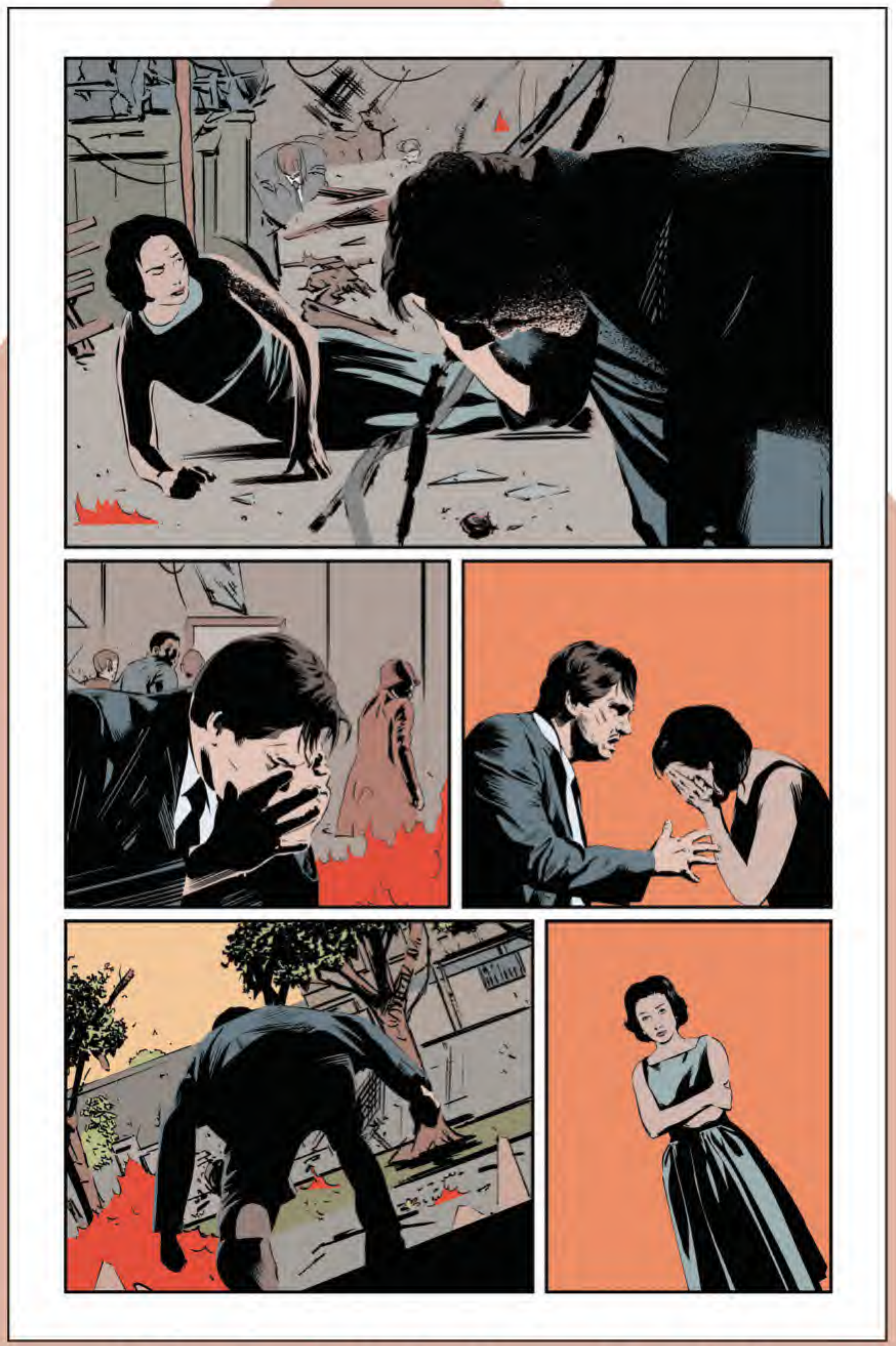
[No dialogue]

Panel 5. Vesper remains alone, inside. She holds her arms to her chest, her eyes full of worry. We won't learn this for some time, but she's complicit in the scheme against Bond. So if he dies, she knows it is on her head to at least some degree. What she's feeling here is guilt.

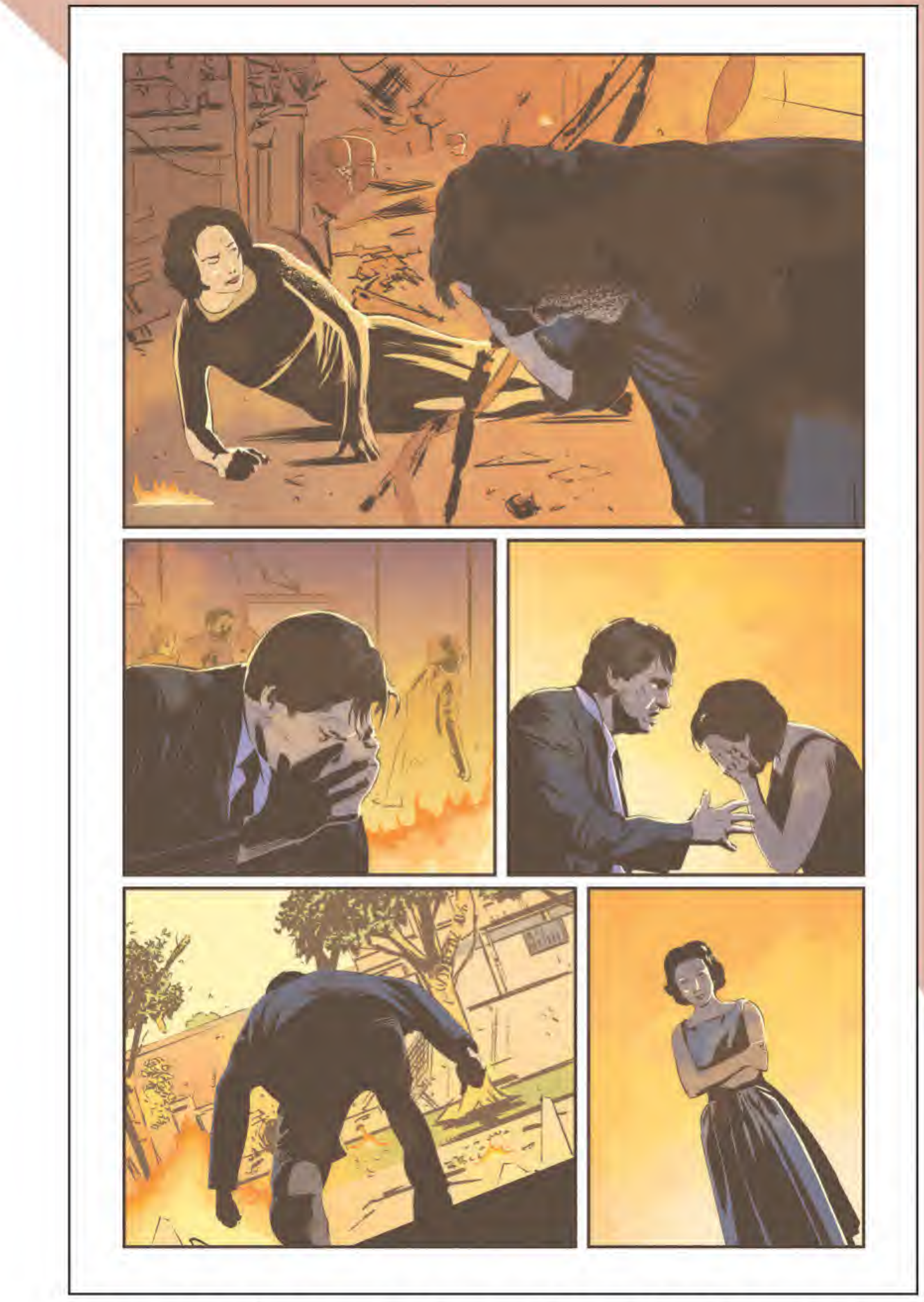
[No dialogue]



page 25 line art by Dennis Calero



page 25 color flats by James Penafiel



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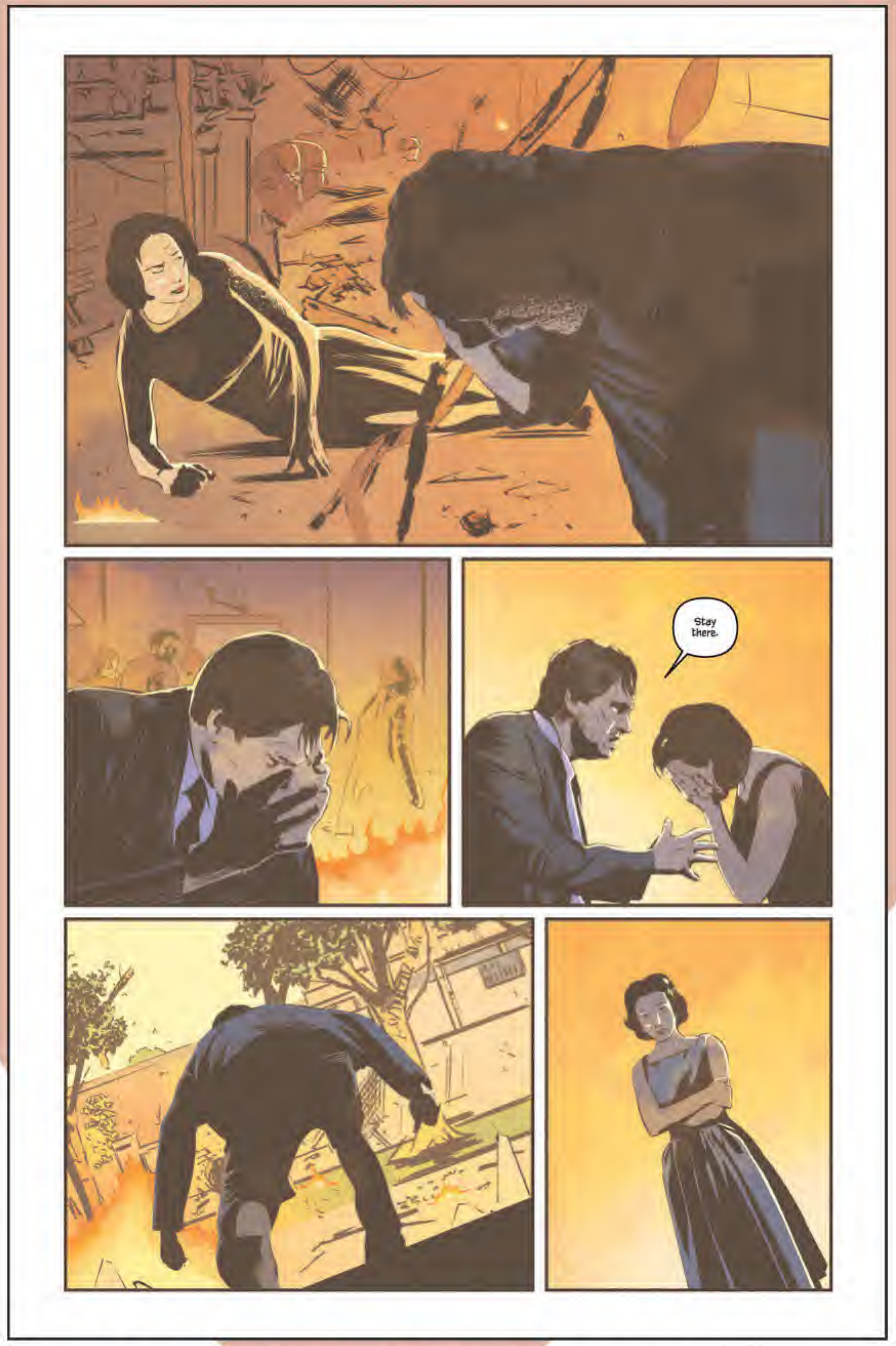


page 25 letters by Simon Bowland

SCRIPT PAGE ONE HUNDRED THIRTY FOUR BY VAN JENSEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. Cut outside. Evening. Idyllic. Bond walks away from the inn, toward the beach (there's a terrace with tables facing the beach). He wears his pyjama coat and dark blue leather sandals. The window to Vesper's room is visible, but he doesn't look back.

1 NARRATION:
He went downstairs and out of the house and across the terrace to the beach. He refrained from looking up to see if she was still standing at the window. If she saw him, she gave no sign.

2 NARRATION:
His feelings for her were confused and he was impatient with the confusion. They had been so simple. He had intended to sleep with her as soon as he could, because he desired her.

Panel 2. Bond is on the beach. He drops off his coat. He wears trunks underneath. His body is marked with various scars, including the notable one on his right hand. Some are old, though, from all the injuries he's survived.

3 NARRATION:
And also because, he admitted it to himself, he wanted coldly to put the repairs to his body to the final test.

4 NARRATION:
He thought they would sleep together for a few days and then he might see something of her in London. Then would come the inevitable disentanglement. But somehow she had crept under his skin.

Panel 3. Bond dives into the water. He's happy. Carefree.

5 NARRATION:
He found her companionship easy and unexacting. There was something enigmatic about her which was a constant stimulus. She gave little of her real personality away.

6 NARRATION:
She was thoughtful and full of consideration without being slavish and without compromising her spirit.

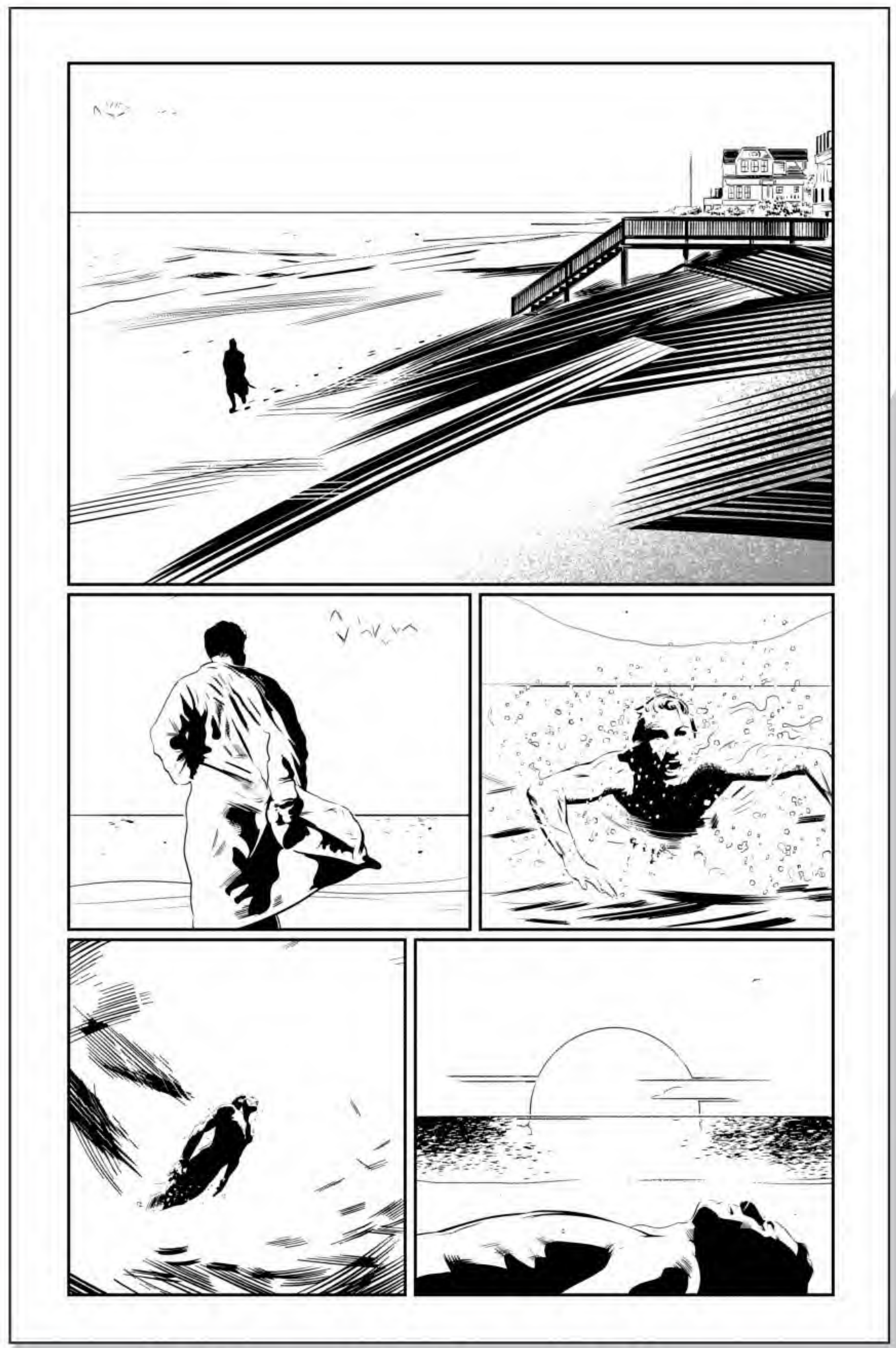
Panel 4. Bond swims. Athletic but unhurried strokes.

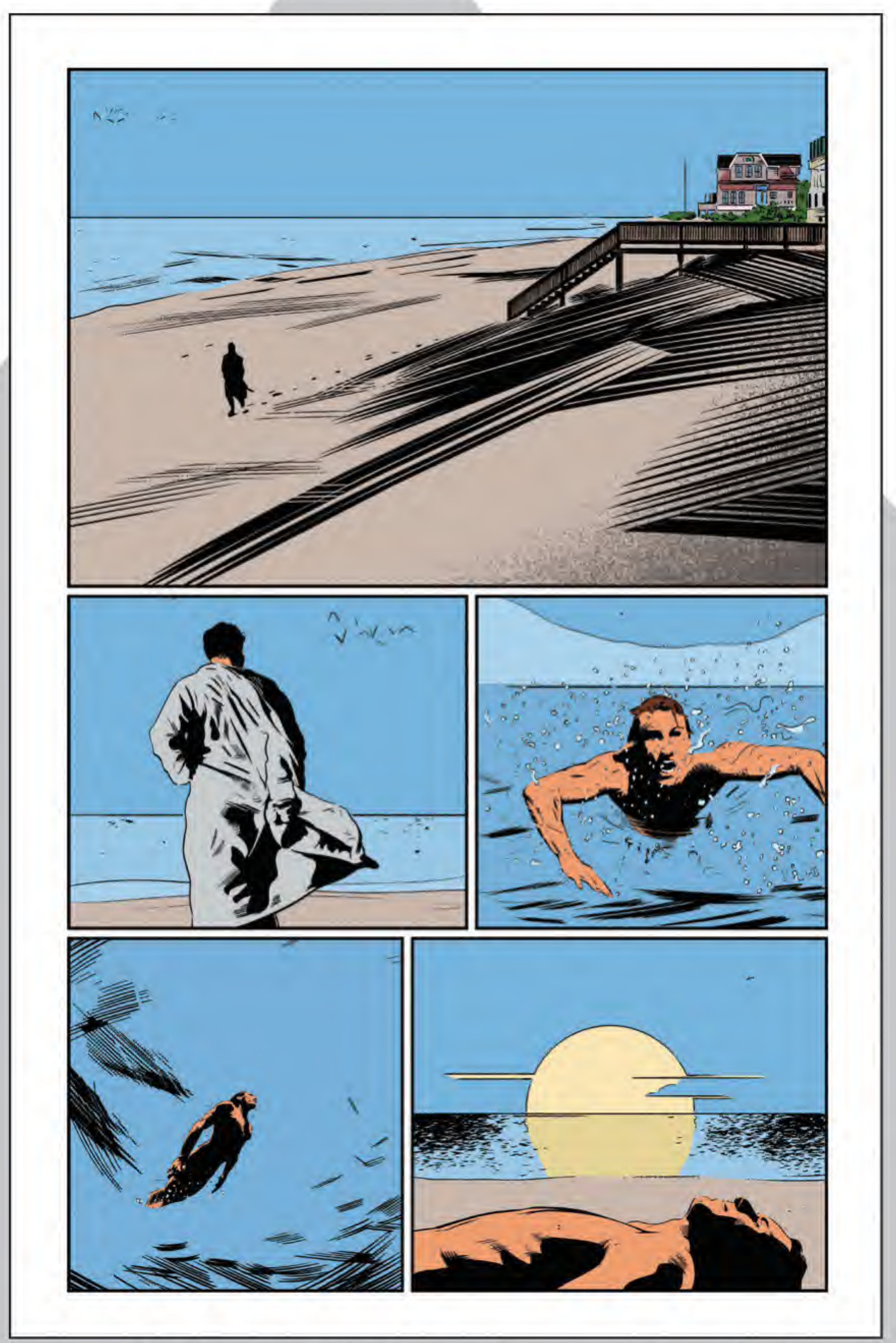
7 NARRATION:
And now he knew that she was profoundly, excitingly sensual. She would surrender herself avidly without ever allowing herself to be possessed.

Panel 5. Bond lies on the beach, naked, looking up at the sky. The sun sets. Again, peaceful, serene. He's a mile down from where he started, so if the inn is visible, it should be at a distance.

8 NARRATION:
When he came ashore nearly a mile down the bay the shadows had already engulfed his distant pyjamas but he knew he had time to lie on the hard sand and dry before the tide of dusk reached him.

9 NARRATION:
He gazed up at the empty blue sky and thought of Vesper. At that moment his mind was made up.


page 134 line art by Dennis Calero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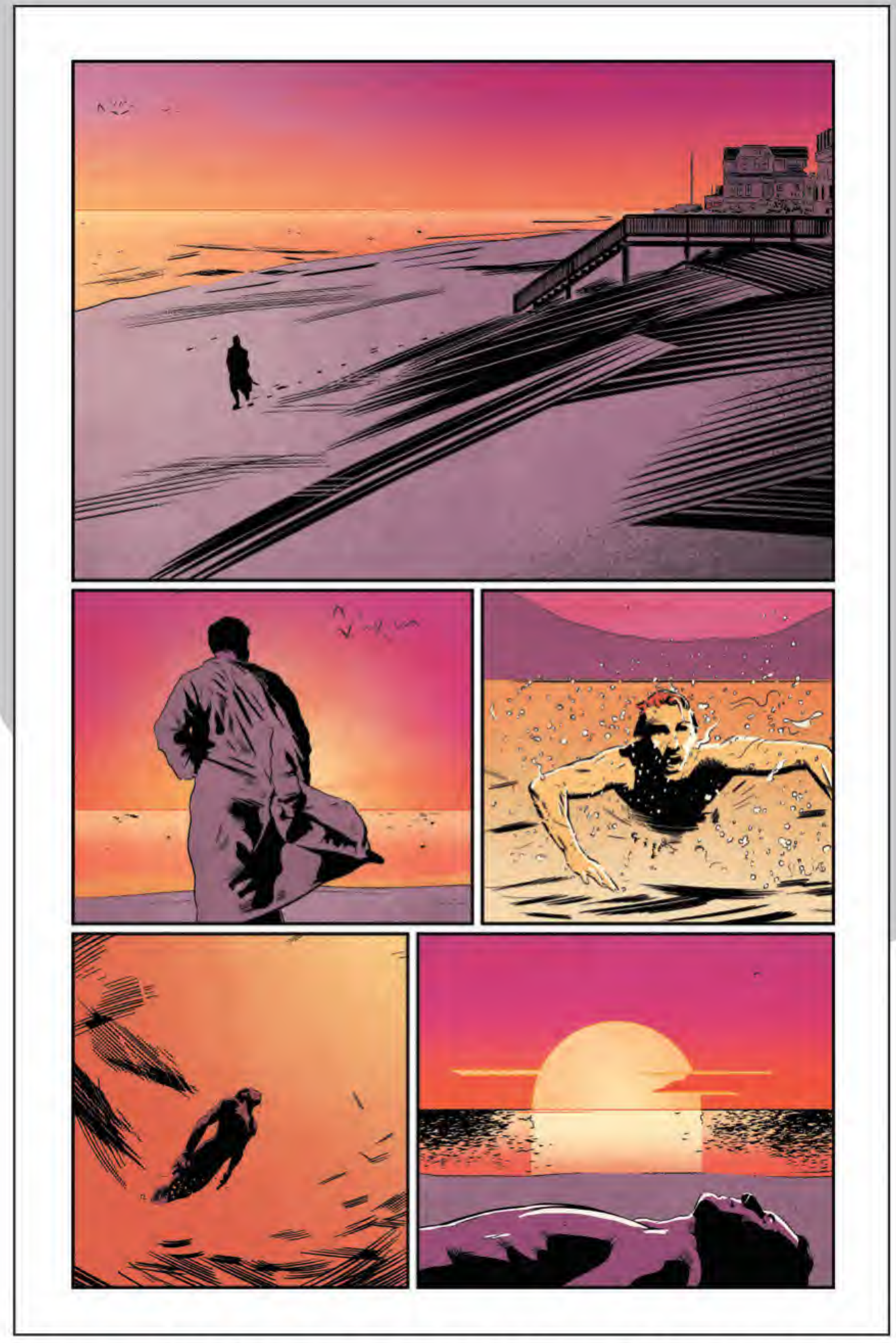
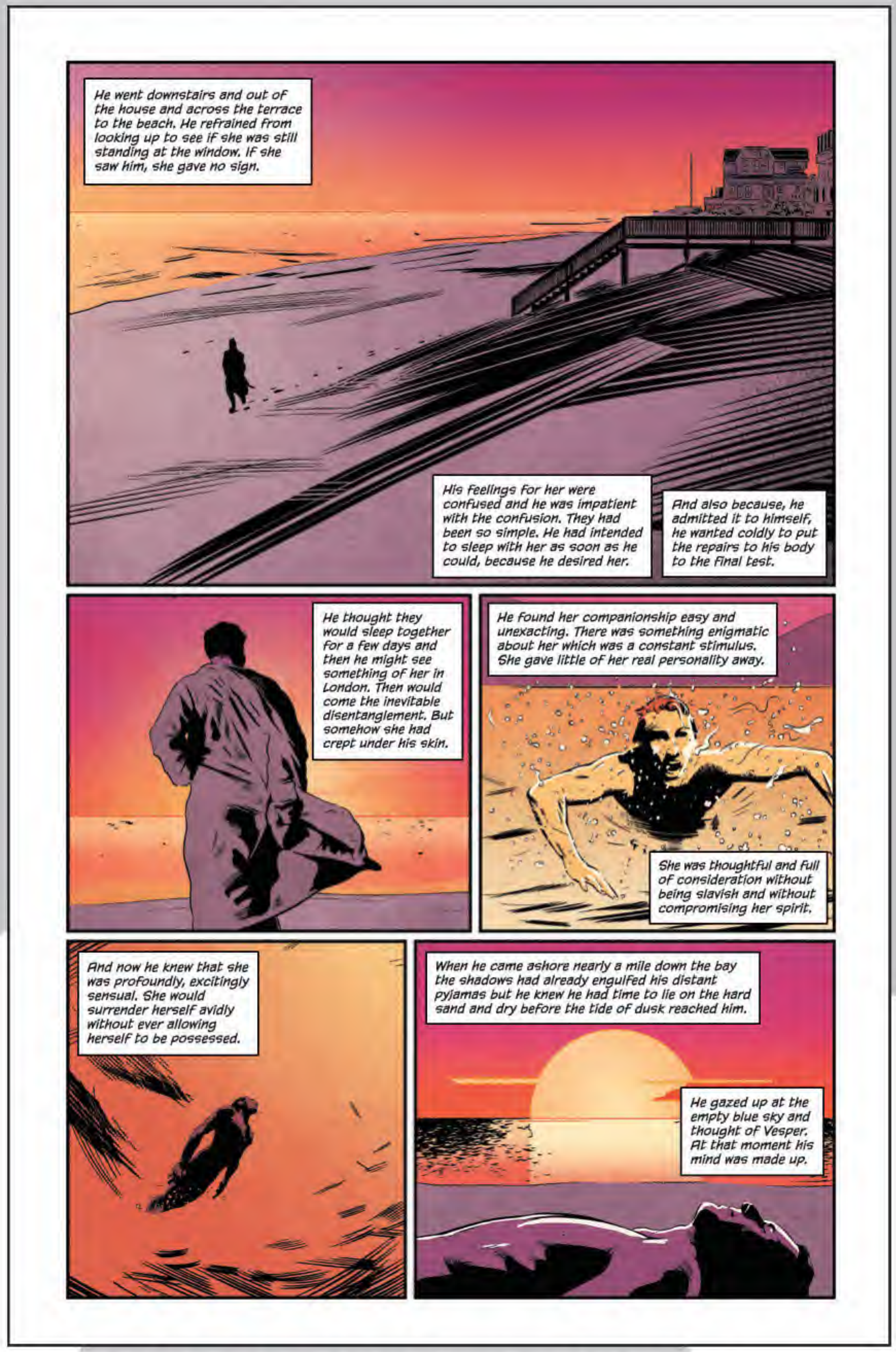
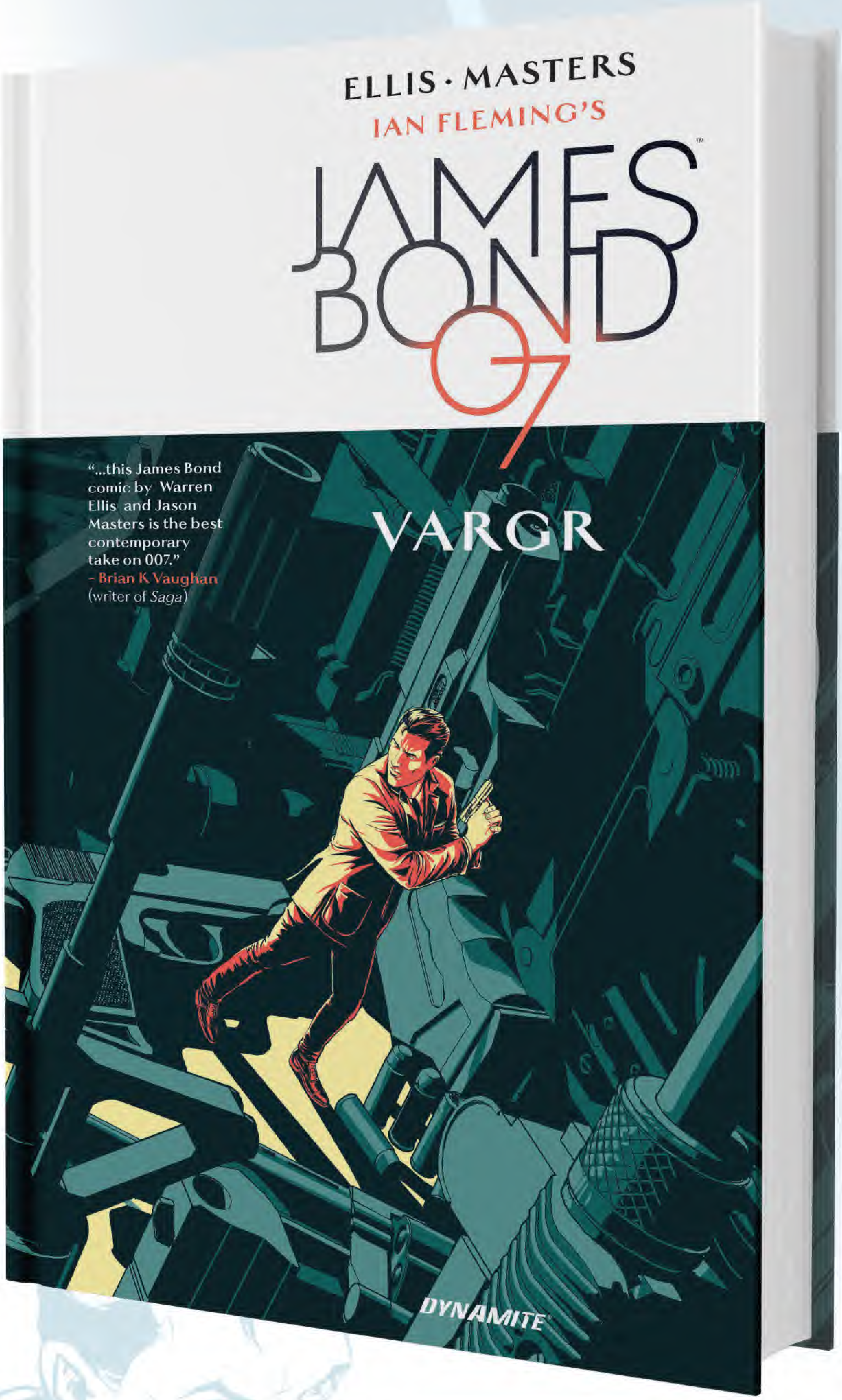

page 134 final colors by Chris O'Halloran


He went downstairs and out of the house and across the terrace to the beach. He refrained from looking up to see if she was still standing at the window. If she saw him, she gave no sign.
His feelings for her were confused and he was impatient with the confusion. They had been so simple. He had intended to sleep with her as soon as he could, because he desired her.
And also because, he admitted it to himself, he wanted coldly to put the repairs to his body to the final test.
He thought they would sleep together for a few days and then he might see something of her in London. Then would come the inevitable disentanglement. But somehow she had crept under his skin.
He found her companionship easy and unexacting. There was something enigmatic about her which was a constant stimulus. She gave little of her real personality away.
She was thoughtful and full of consideration without being slavish and without compromising her spirit.
And now he knew that she was profoundly, excitingly sensual. She would surrender herself avidly without ever allowing herself to be possessed.
When he came ashore nearly a mile down the bay the shadows had already engulfed his distant pyjamas but he knew he had time to lie on the hard sand and dry before the tide of dusk reached him.
He gazed up at the empty blue sky and thought of Vesper. At that moment his mind was made up.
page 134 letters by Simon Bowland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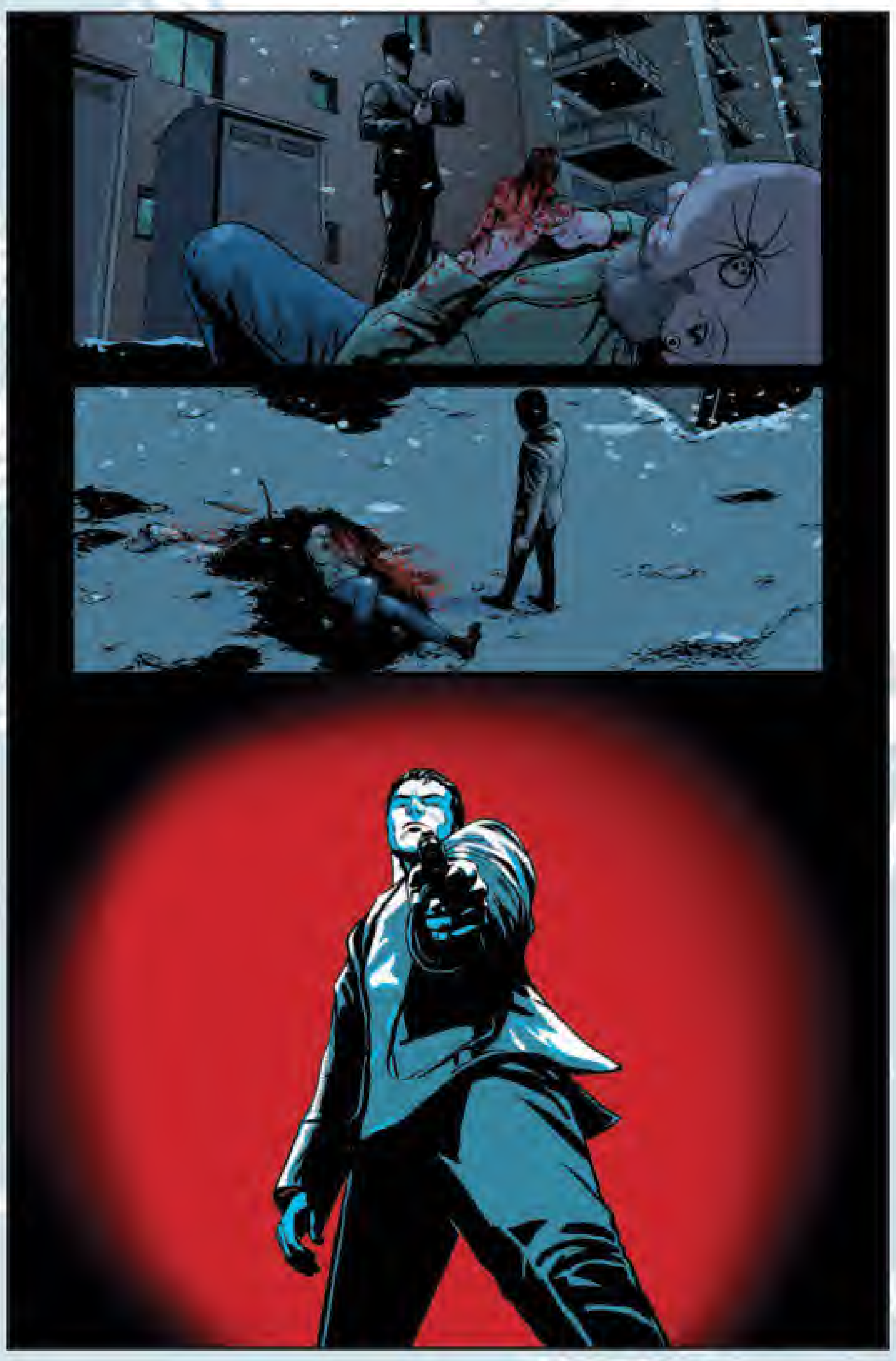

JAMES BOND: VARGR HC & TPB

Warren Ellis | writer
Jason Masters | artist
Guy Major | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer

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TPB: 9781524104801
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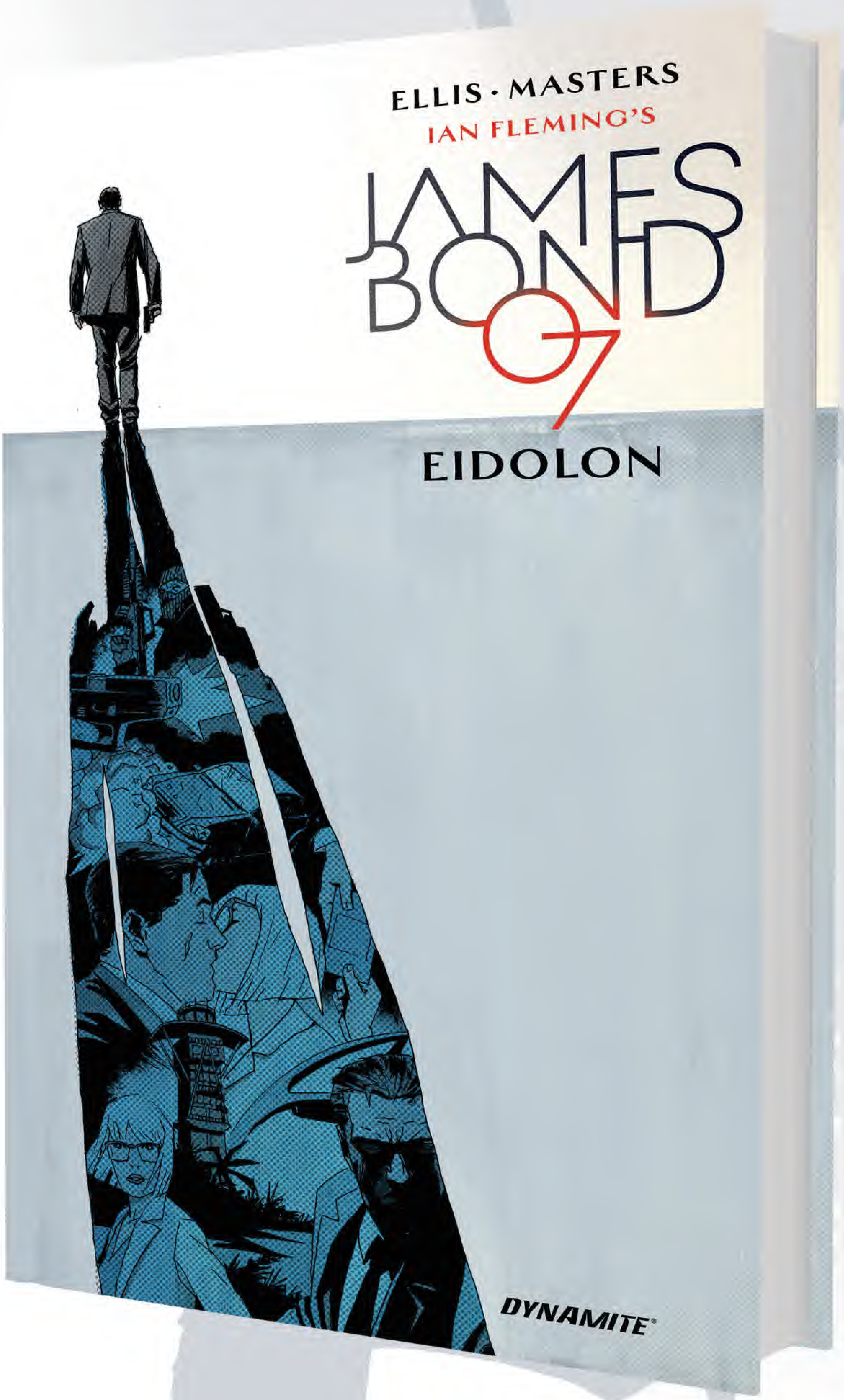

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EIDOLON HARDCOVER

Warren Ellis | writer
Jason Masters | artist
Guy Major | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer
Dominic Reardon | cover

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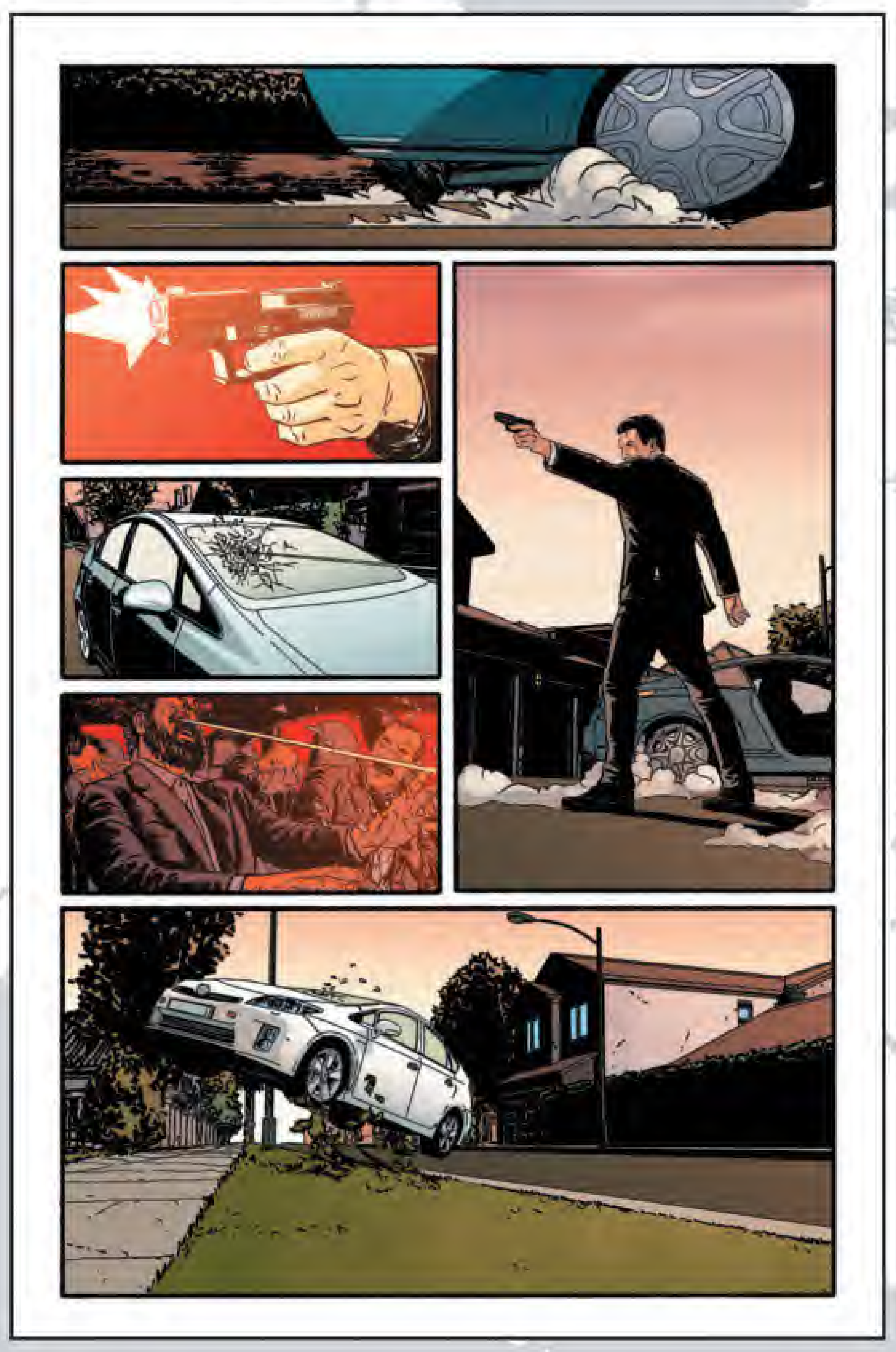

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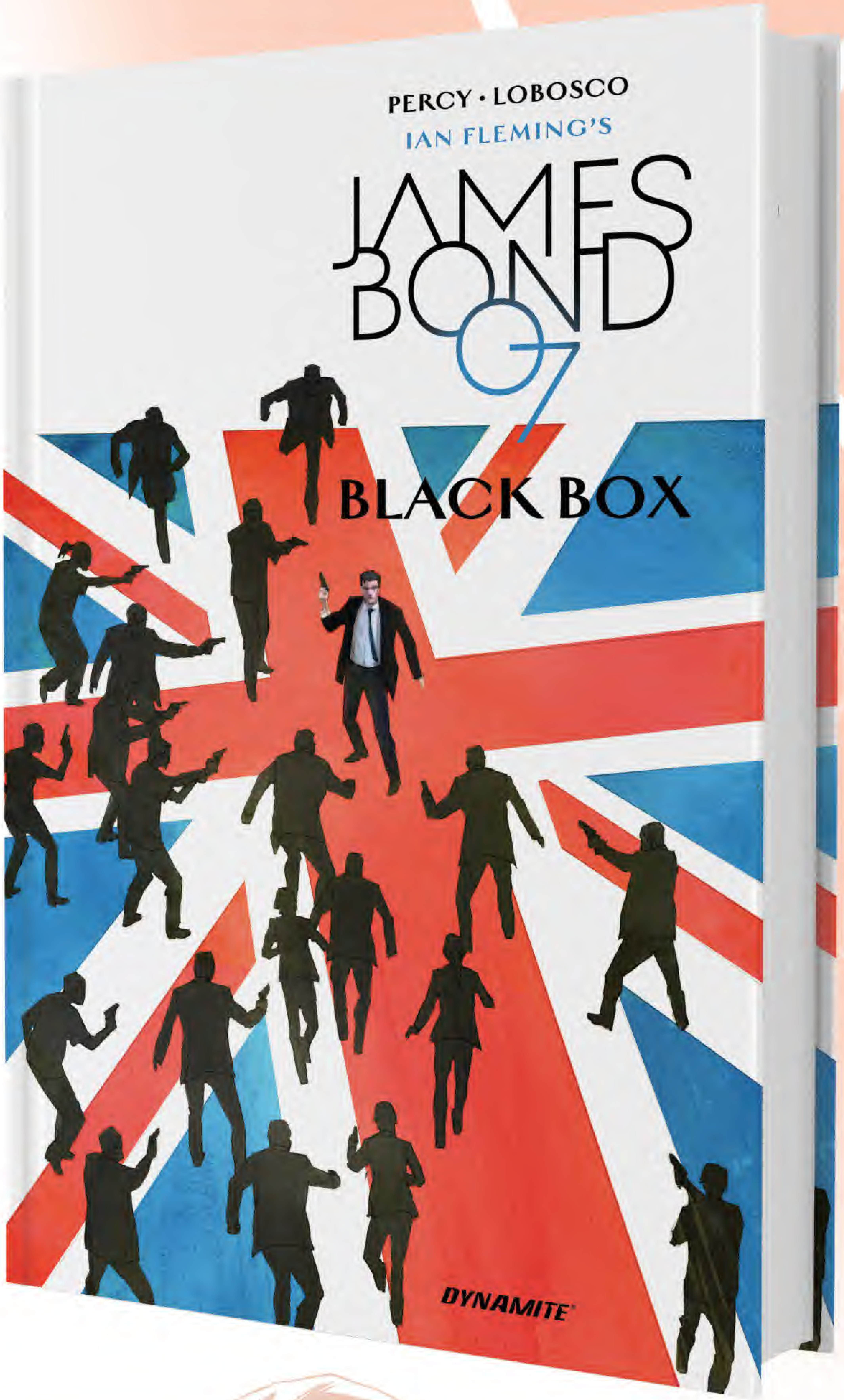

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JAMES BOND: BLACK BOX
HARDCOVER

Benjamin Percy | writer
Rapha Lobosco | artist
Chris O'Halloran | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer
Dominic Reardon | cover

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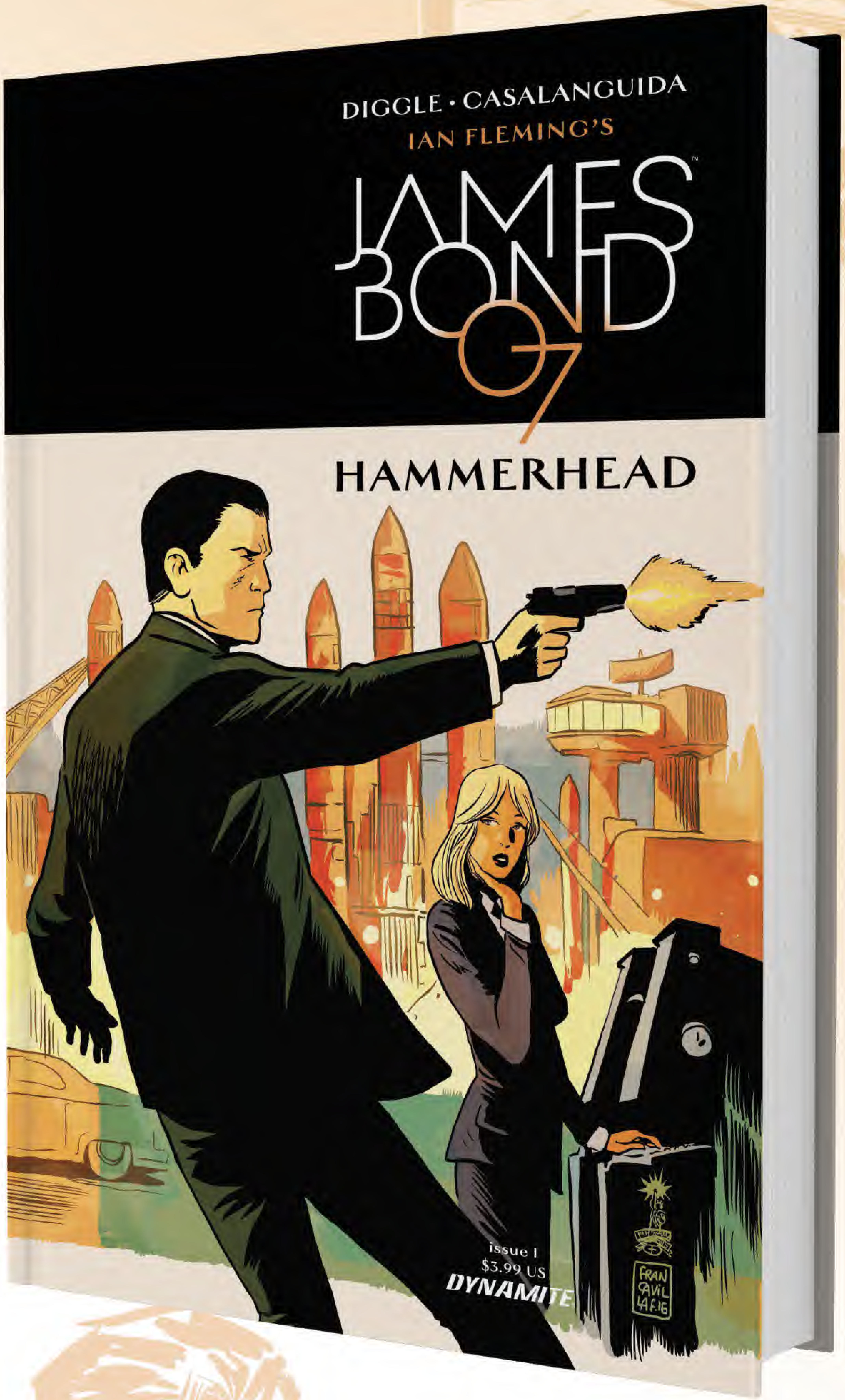

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– Bryan Hitch
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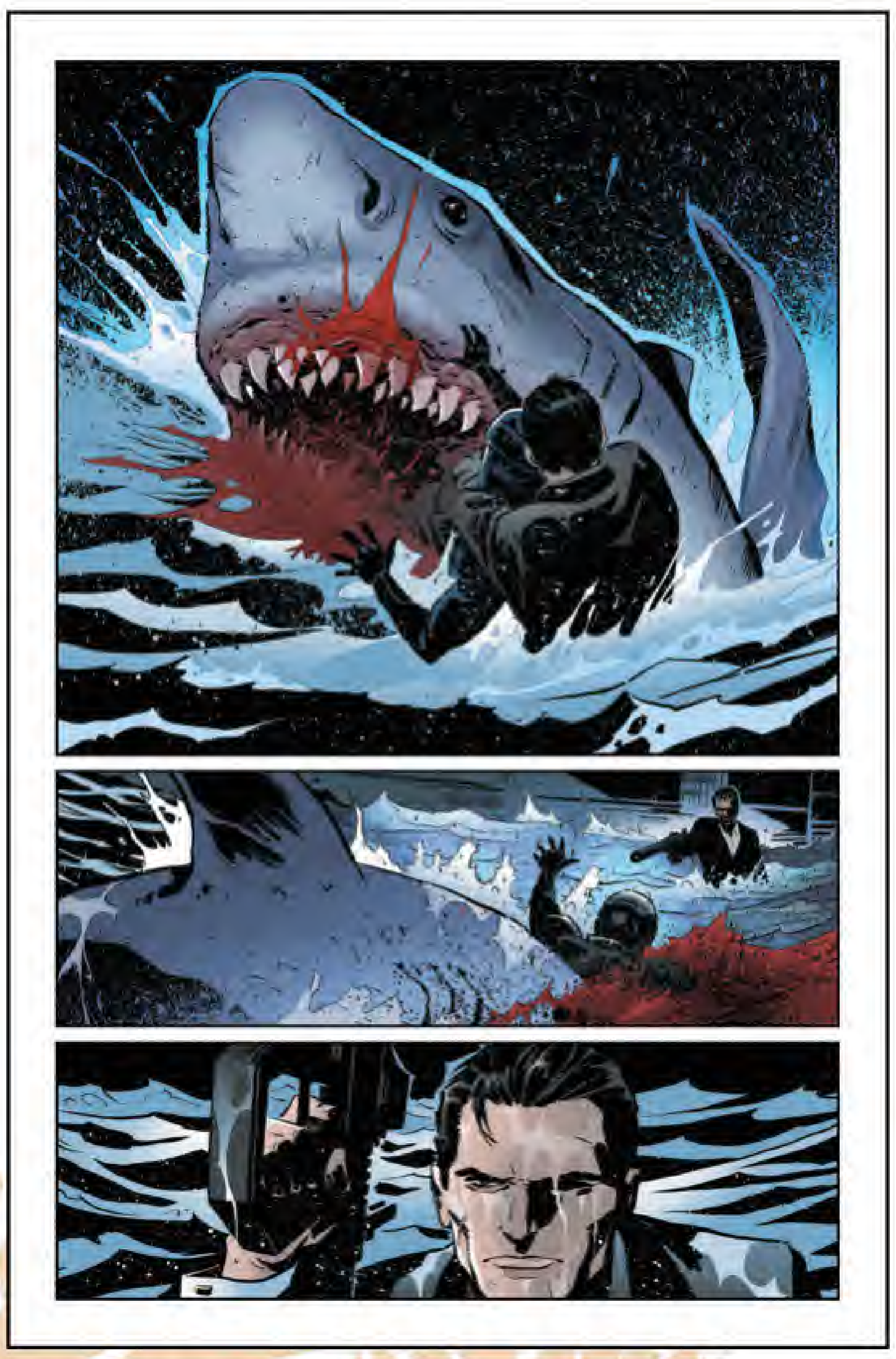

JAMES BOND: HAMMERHEAD
HARDCOVER

Andy Diggle | writer
Luca Casalanguida | artist
Chris Blythe | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer
Francesco Francavilla | cover

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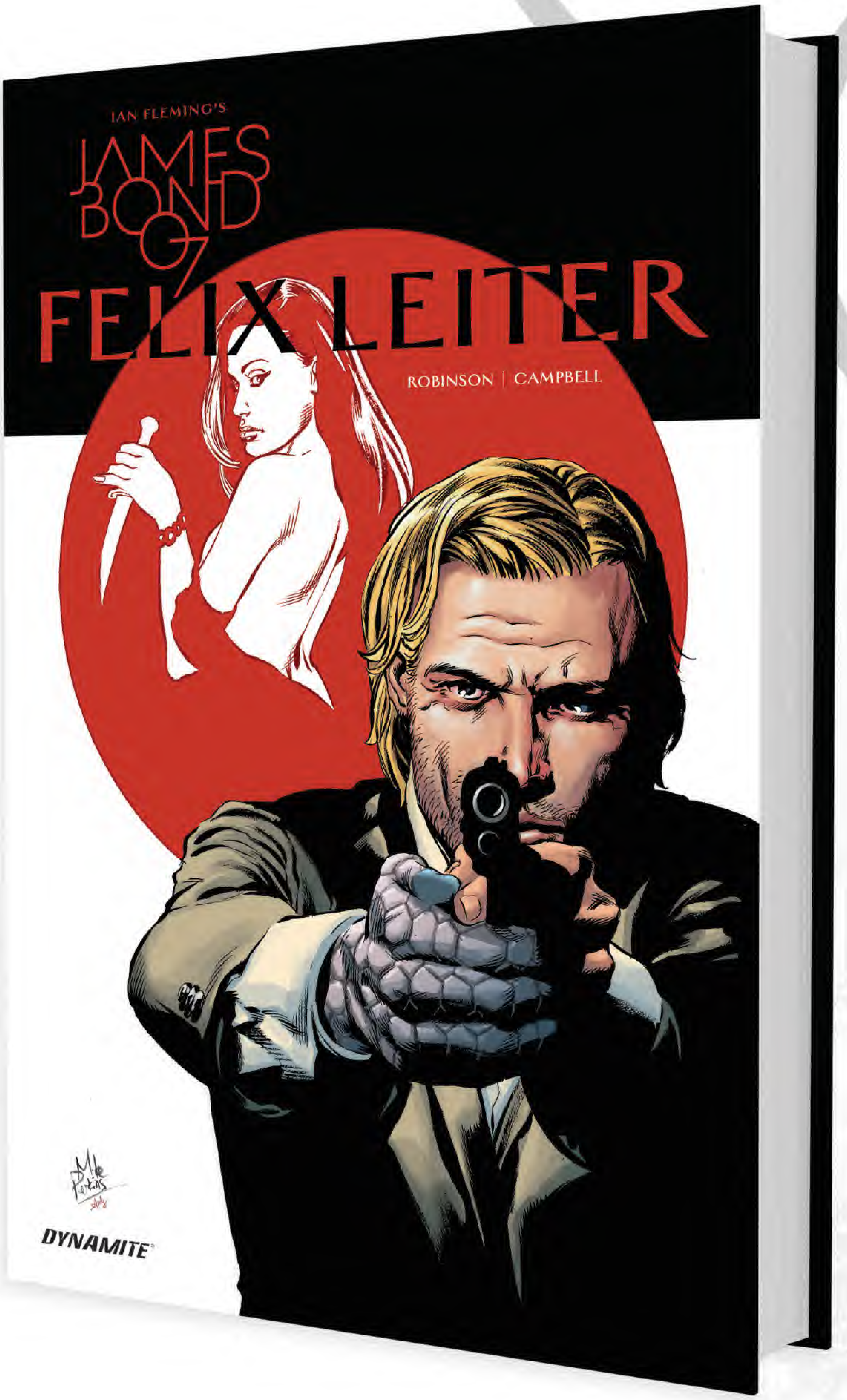

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JAMES BOND: FELIX LEITER HARDCOVER

James Robinson | writer
Aaron Campbell | artist
Salvatore Aiala | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer
Mike Perkins | cover

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Andy Diggle | writer
Luca Casalanguida | artist
Chris Blythe | colorist
Simon Bowland | letterer
Greg Smallwood | cover

Collecting issues 1-6
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